PIONEERING IN CHINA

Marion A. Habig, O. F. M.

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PIONEERING IN CHINA

Lin Shen Fu—Father Engbring
as a Chinese missionary.

Pioneering in China

THE STORY OF
The REV. FRANCIS XAVIER ENGBRING, O.F.M.
First Native American Priest in China,
1857 - 1895
With Sketches of His Missionary Comrades

By
THE REV. MARION A. HABIG, O. F. M.,
Associate Editor, *Franciscan Herald*

With a Foreword by
THE MOST REV. FRANCIS J. BECKMAN, D. D.,
Archbishop of Dubuque

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ANNEX CATHOLIC
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To
Catholic American Missionaries
In the Far East
In
Commemoration of the
Fiftieth Anniversary of the
Establishment of
Catholic American Missions
in China
1881 - 1931

FOREWORD

The first Catholic foreign missionary to China was a Franciscan. In the year 1305, John of Montecorvino built his monastery and school in the very shadow of the imperial palace at Peking; and later he became an Archbishop, while seven other Friars were appointed his suffragan bishops.

The first native born American priest to sail for the missions in China, whose life is the subject of this biography, was also a Franciscan. And even though this fact may lack deep significance, yet it is a prerogative to which the American sons of St. Francis may point with justifiable pride. We congratulate the author on bringing out the life-story of Father Engbring and we foresee a widespread distribution of the work. For the soul of the Church in America is attuned to the missionary cause, and all of us will want to know more about the first American priest who went out to China charting the course

for the Christian armadas that have sailed from our shores in more recent times.

The author, a Veteran member of the Catholic Students' Mission Crusade, merits our best wishes and our gratitude, for in giving us another worthy missionary biography he has materially contributed to the realization of our slogan: "That America may know and serve the missions."

✠ FRANCIS BECKMAN,

Archbishop of Dubuque and Executive Chairman of the Catholic Students' Mission Crusade

October 16, 1930

PREFACE

The year 1931 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of Catholic American missions in China. It was in 1881 that the first Catholic priest, Father Remy Goette, O. F. M., left our shores for China to devote himself to missionary work in that country. True, he was not an American by birth; but, as an exile from his native country, he had found a safe refuge in our Middle West, where he could pursue his higher studies and be ordained to the holy priesthood. Besides, in the years following, his example was imitated by other young missionaries from the States, among them the first native American priest to go to China. Thus began that exodus of American missionaries to China which in recent years has assumed such large proportions.

Only fifty years ago! But we must remember, America itself was a missionary country down to the beginning of the twentieth century. To a certain extent it remained such even after the new century commenced. In the first century and

a half of the existence of the American Republic, therefore, the Catholic Church in America could not send many missionaries to foreign lands.

Within the first decades of the twentieth century, however, when European countries were no longer able to bear the burden alone, happily and providentially an active interest in foreign missions was awakened in our midst.

As the century progressed, the missionary spirit became more and more widespread in the youngest of Christian nations. Year by year the ranks of our little missionary army in the field afar were swelled by new recruits. During the year 1929 alone, one hundred Catholic Americans left our shores to labor as soldiers of the Cross in pagan lands. And in the beginning of 1930 it was estimated that the total number of Catholic American missionaries,—priests, brothers, sisters and laymen,—laboring for the salvation of souls in foreign countries, was about one thousand.

China especially felt the blessed influence of this newly enkindled missionary enthusiasm. Surely it would be a matter of no little self-reproach, if we had no record of the life and labors of the first native American priest who went out from our midst and spent himself in the

service of China's missions—Father Francis Xavier Engbring, O. F. M.

True, we do not know much about his life and work. Practically the only sources we have for his biography are a number of letters written by him and by a fellow missionary. In this he is not unlike his great confrère of the Middle Ages, Father John of Montecorvino, O. F. M., who is rightly styled the Apostle of China. This celebrated missionary arrived at Cambaluc (later caled Peking, and now Peiping) in 1294, six centuries earlier. As papal legate to the court of the Great Khan, he was graciously received by the successor of Kublai Khan. Marco Polo had just returned to Europe. Father John remained in China, and for many years labored single-handed as the first Catholic missionary in that vast pagan country. In 1305 he wrote a letter to Europe and another in 1306. These letters, which recount his hardships and successes, are practically the only documentary accounts of his life. In Europe they created a lively interest in his work. Numerous confrères came to his aid; and Pope Clement V named him the first archbishop of Peking and primate of the entire Orient.

The letters written by Father Francis Xavier

Engbring likewise show that he was a valiant pioneer, a worthy model for all who would imitate his noble example. In the following pages we have gathered all the available data on his life, together with some notes on his missionary companions which form an enlightening background for the picture of Father Engbring's life.

We are convinced that an account of Father Engbring's life and labors will be an inspiration not only to those who follow in his footsteps or who hear Christ's call to arms reecho in their hearts, but also to each and every one who takes a genuine and active interest in our Chinese missions—or, for that matter in any of our foreign missions.

May then this little book help to perpetuate the memory of our first native American priest in China! May the example of his life not only fortify and increase the mission spirit of our missioners in foreign lands and of their faithful friends at home, but also win new recruits as well as new mission friends who will be devoted heart and soul to the great and noble work of the propagation of our holy Faith!

THE AUTHOR.

Chicago, the Feast of St. Francis, 1930

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PIONEERING IN CHINA

CHAPTER I

SAVING WUCHANG FROM FIRE

The year 1891 was one of civil disturbances in the Yangtze valley, central China. The uprisings seem to have been instigated chiefly by anti-Christian literature emanating from the province of Hunan. Fanatic mobs attacked numerous missions in central China and wrought considerable damage.[1]

In the province of Hupeh and particularly in Wuchang, its capital, this unrest continued during the year 1892. Plans were laid to destroy the Catholic mission in Wuchang by fire. Rumors of the plot spread beyond the city and reached the ears of the captains of several foreign warships, then patrolling the Yangtze. So many churches and mission houses had been destroyed in the

1. Latourette, K. S.: *A History of Christian Missions in China* (Macmillan Co., New York, 1929), p. 356; he cites also *The Anti-Foreign Riots in China in 1891. With an Appendix.* (North China Herald Office, 1892).

recent past, that the foreign troops had lost all patience and were eager to teach the Chinese a lesson. So, when word was received of the proposed burning of the Wuchang mission, six warships rushed to the scene.

Wuchang is situated on the Yangtze river opposite the point where the Han river flows into the Yangtze. Across the river lie the cities of Hankow and Hanyang, separated only by the Han river. Thus is formed a cluster of three large cities. Between Hankow and Wuchang there was now an array of six warships, ready to bombard the rebel city and thus set it on fire, as soon as the first column of smoke would rise up from the Catholic mission. The latter occupied a place of prominence and could be seen from the river.

Within the city, however, there was at this time a cool-headed American missionary, Father Francis Xavier Engbring, O. F. M. He was rector of the seminary there; and he it was who saved the city from destruction by fire. Having learned of the plans of the foreign warships, he prevailed upon the commander-in-chief not to issue his command to fire, until he would send him a written message telling him that the

Catholic mission was really in flames. Then the daring missioner went back into the city.

Suddenly a large cloud of smoke rose up, as it seemed, from the Catholic mission. The indignation of the sailors on the six warships had reached its climax; they were standing impatiently at their cannons ready to pour the deadly contents full upon the doomed city. The commander-in-chief was eagerly awaiting news from Father Engbring.

Meantime, a messenger had been sent by the missioner posthaste to the river's bank. There he jumped into a small speedboat, standing ready for him, and hastened directly to the commander's ship with a written note from Father Engbring. It revealed the fact that not the mission but a house in back of the mission was burning. Of course, the bombardment did not begin, and the city was saved from destruction.

When the vice-roy of Wuchang and the other officials of the city learned that six warships on the Yangtze were pointing their cannons at the city, they naturally feared for their lives; and like good guardians of their people they forthwith leaped on their horses and made good their escape. Later, when they were informed that the

city owed its rescue to Father Engbring, they came in solemn parade to the Catholic mission and personally expressed their indebtedness to the missionary.[2]

* * * *

The hero of this episode, Father Engbring, was, as we have said, an American missionary. In point of fact, he was the first native American priest who went to China as a missionary.[3] He

2. Fr. Engbring himself revealed these facts to his fellow missioner, Father Edmund Roediger, O. F. M., who in turn communicated them to his American confrère, Father Silas Barth, O. F. M., in a letter dated March 15, 1921. This letter is preserved in the archives of St. Joseph College, Mayslake, Hinsdale, Ill.

3. As the writer has shown in his article *The First American Foreign Missioners* which appeared in the *Illinois Catholic Historical Review* (now called *Mid-America*), Vol. XI, pp. 239-250 and 364-369. In the *Diamond Jubilee History of the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois*, p. 669, we find the name of the Rev. Francis McVeigh who, "spent the greater part of his priestly life in the Chinese missions" and "came to the diocese in 1889." Despite several inquiries, the writer could not ascertain whether Father McVeigh (died 1906) was born in this country or abroad, nor when he went to the Chinese missions. He was probably born in Ireland and went to China from that country.

was born June 20, 1857, at Cincinnati, Ohio.[4] In Baptism he received the name of Henry.

In 1864, when Henry was about seven years old, the family moved their home to Effingham, Illinois. Their home at this place was always known for its ready hospitality to the Franciscan Fathers of Teutopolis, a little town lying a few miles to the east. In those days the Franciscan Fathers of Teutopolis regularly made missionary trips into the surrounding country, including practically all of southern Illinois.

Not content with offering his home to the Fathers as a place of shelter and rest, Mr. Engbring, Henry's father, often took the trouble of exchanging such alms as the friars of Teutopolis could not use, for others of which they were in need. In those days the Teutopolis Friary sent lay brothers on begging tours around the countryside at harvest time; in this way, even

4. Not at Effingham, Illinois, as we wrote in the *Illinois Catholic Historical Review*. The fact that Father Engbring is a native of Cincinnati is evident not only from the testimony of his brother, Mr. W. H. Engbring, but also from a testimonial letter sent to Teutopolis, Illinois, on the occasion of Henry's reception into the Franciscan order. This letter, dated November 15, 1873 and signed by the Most Rev. J. B. Purcell, Archbishop of Cincinnati, is in the Provincial Archives at St. Anthony's Friary, St. Louis, Mo.

as in the days of St. Francis, provision was made for the bodily needs of the friars. But it often happened that the good farmers gave the visiting brother too much of one commodity and not enough of another. Then it was that Mr. Engbring, who kept a general store near St. Anthony's Church, Effingham, rendered valuable services by making the necessary exchanges.

In 1867 or 1868 the well known Jesuit missionary, Father Francis Xavier Weninger, gave a mission at St. Anthony's Church, Effingham. Henry Engbring, ten or eleven years old, served for him at holy Mass. Between the church and the rectory the missionary had a large wooden cross erected; and in front of this cross he preached his sermons. At the close of one of these sermons, which was an eloquent discourse on the subject of vocations, the missionary singled out one of the little altar boys standing near him and, placing his hand on the boy's head, publicly asked him:

"My boy, what do you intend to become?"

Without any hesitation the boy replied: "I'm going to be a missionary!"

And the missionary assured the assembled people that this lad, who was none other than Henry Engbring, would one day be a priest.[5]

5. Related to the writer by Father Roger Middendorf, O. F. M., and Mr. W. H. Engbring. There is no doubt about the story, since it has been told to Mr. W. H. Engbring "several times, years ago, by some of the older members of the congregation."

CHAPTER II

IN THE TRAINING CAMP

In old St. Joseph's College at Teutopolis, Illinois, founded by the Franciscan Fathers in 1862, Henry Engbring received a thorough high-school education. A brother of Henry, Mr. W. H. Engbring, President of Effingham State Bank, informed the writer that, if he remembered rightly, Henry began to attend this college when he was but ten or eleven years of age. Certain it is that he was a student there when twelve and a half years old, for Father Jerome Hellhake, O. F. M., who remembers him as a very diligent student, met him there for the first time on December 31, 1869.

On January 14, 1874, at the age of sixteen and a half years, he entered the Franciscan novitiate, likewise at Teutopolis. In view of his future career as a missionary, the superiors made a happy choice when they selected as his patron

saint in the Franciscan order the great missionary, St. Francis Xavier. In the holy solitude of the cloister, Frater (i. e., Friar) Xavier, as Henry Engbring was now called, began that training which made him a zealous priest and later a heroic soldier of the Cross. This course of training extended over a period of six years. The first year, the novitiate, was spent in prayer and meditation and in the study of the religious life. After completing his novitiate, Friar Xavier pronounced his first or simple vows, January 16, 1875. For a half year he continued to study the ancient classics in the Teutopolis friary.

He was then sent to the Franciscan Friary, dedicated to the great Franciscan Apostle of South America, St. Francis Solano, at Quincy, Illinois, where he studied philosophy for two years (September, 1875—September, 1877). After this course he was transferred to St. Anthony's Friary in St. Louis, Mo.; and here he pursued his theological studies for three years (1877—1880). During his first year at St. Louis, he was admitted to solemn profession, March 5, 1878; by which solemn act he bound himself irrevocably to the service of God in the Franciscan order.

In the beginning of the second scholastic year,

September 19, 1878, the Rt. Rev. Caspar Henry Borgess, D. D., Bishop of Detroit (died 1890), conferred on him in old St. Anthony's Church, St. Louis, the tonsure, the four minor orders and the subdiaconate. At the end of the same school year, on June 22, 1879, the Rt. Rev. Patrick Ryan, Auxiliary Bishop of St. Louis, promoted him to the diaconate. The ordination took place in the Church of St. John the Evangelist at Sixteenth and Chestnut Streets, near the Union Station. A year later Friar Xavier completed his theological course; and on May 16, 1880, he was raised to the holy priesthood in the same church and by the same bishop.

By gradual steps, Friar Xavier was thus advanced to the holy priesthood. The preparation preceding that happiest day in his young life when he celebrated his first holy Mass—he was but twenty-two and a half years old at this time—was indeed a thorough one. During the five years preceding that day, he had devoted himself with unrelenting diligence to the mastery of the sacred sciences: scholastic philosophy, the Hebrew language, dogmatic and moral theology, Holy Scripture and Church history. During this difficult course of studies Friar Xavier showed

that he was both a talented and a diligent student.

All the while, however, the strict religious life commenced in the novitiate, was continued. Day after day study alternated with prayer and meditation. With his fellow students and confrères, Friar Xavier daily chanted the Divine Office in choir, the friars' oratory adjoining the church. The Canonical Hours, as the parts of the Divine Office are called, were distributed over the day. Not only during his novitiate but also during the other years of his seminary life, he and the other young friars rose from their hard couches at midnight and chanted Matins and Lauds, and then spent a half hour in quiet meditation, the midnight service lasting an hour and a quarter or half. In the morning they chanted Prime and Tierce, assisted at holy Mass and received holy Communion.

The morning hours were spent in study and class-work. Before noon they chanted Sext and None. The midday meal was followed by a period of recreation and a visit to the Blessed Sacrament. Then, Vespers and Compline, more classes and another half hour of meditation. After the midday and evening meals the whole community repaired to the choir for a short visit

to the Blessed Sacrament. During the evening visit the friars recited their night prayers in common and the superior imparted to them his priestly blessing.

During the rest of the evening the young friars prepared their lessons for the next day in a classroom or in the refectory. They could not well use their own rooms, or cells, as they are called, for this purpose, since at that time there was neither steam-heating nor electric light in the friaries.

One day was not very unlike another. Uneventful years one might call them, these years of study and prayer; but they were years that meant much for the future lives of the youthful friars—they were years of strenuous training, making them competent soldiers and captains in the army of Christ.

Father Odoric Derenthal, O. F. M., veteran missionary among the Indians of the north, writes of Father Engbring's student days: "I was his fellow student in philosophy and theology and was ordained with him and eleven other young friars by the Rt. Rev. Bishop Ryan, later Archbishop of Philadelphia, on May 16, 1880. During all these years I not only loved him, but

also highly esteemed him on account of his fine qualities. He was exceptionally bright in his studies, had a good judgment, and his character and conduct were without reproach. There was nothing boisterous, repulsive in him, but he possessed kindness and gentleness, a certain nobility."

After their ordination to the holy priesthood the young friars did not at once receive faculties to preach and to hear confessions, but spent an additional year in theological studies. During this year Father Engbring's health broke down. His condition became alarming when he began to expectorate blood due to hemorrhages of the lungs. The superiors, therefore, sent him to the friary at Indianapolis, Indiana, for a vacation.

He soon regained his health, at least to such an extent that he was able to assist in the teaching of philosophy. Father Odoric, his fellow student, writes of him: "I think that before we received the cura (the faculties to preach and to hear confessions) he was picked out to substitute for one of the Fathers in philosophy." At any rate, in the summer of 1881 he was appointed professor of philosophy in the Franciscan house of studies at Quincy, Illinois; and here he taught

his young confrères for three years. After that he taught theology for four years at the Franciscan seminary in St. Louis.

While serving his province, the Province of the Most Sacred Heart, in the capacity of teacher and imparting to the young friars the same thorough education he had received, Father Engbring, as it were, passed through a second period of training; teaching his young confrères, he himself grew more proficient in philosophical and theological lore. Furthermore, he had the advantage of a strict observance of the religious life, as it is kept in the houses of studies.

CHAPTER III

THE CALL TO ARMS

On Christmas day, 1881, while Father Engbring was teaching at Quincy, the Most Rev. Bernardine a Portu Romatino, minister general of the Franciscan order, sent out an encyclical letter containing a plea for the foreign missions of the order.[1]

"In most fervent prayer," he wrote, "I beg the Lord that very soon he may enable me to come to the aid of our missions which are in the greatest need of new recruits. Almost daily I receive from our various missions all over the world letters in which the vicars apostolic, the prefects, the commissaries general, the guardians of colleges beg me to send them new recruits and to replace with strong missionaries those who have been rendered unfit by old age or poor health—lest on

1. Printed in the first number (January, 1882) of *Acta Ordinis Fratrum Minorum* (Quaracchi, near Florence), the official organ of the Order of Friars Minor.

account of the lack of priests the many souls of infidels and heretics and Catholics, who by the operation of the Holy Ghost are now asking more frequently than before for the Faith and the Sacraments, be lost; lest to our grief and disgrace the missions entrusted to our care pass into other hands because of our failure to provide for them.

"God knows with what great sorrow these requests and lamentations afflict my heart. To some, indeed, it seems that I am heartless or not solicitous enough. But what can I do when the provinces of Italy which formerly supplied almost all the missionaries have been suppressed now for twenty years, while only one or the other of their number are just beginning to revive. I have, indeed, asked for help from the provinces beyond the Alps, and not in vain. Some very good young brethren have set out for the missions from Belgium, Holland, France and the Tyrol.

"But the needs of the missions are still urgent; and I cannot but encourage again and again those young friars who possess a good will and are aflame with zeal for the salvation of souls, wherever they may be, to go to the missions. To the provincial superiors, however, who frequently are loath to send young men to the

missions because there is a lack of priests in their provinces, I cannot but say: If, to save the life of your neighbor's body, you will surely not hesitate to give half of your bread supply, why do you refuse to send to the missions, say, one priest every other year to procure eternal life for the souls of people who are in the greatest spiritual misery? Put your confidence in God, and he will reward you with interest for whatever you sacrifice for his honor and the preservation of the glory of the order."

This call to arms from the minister general of the order struck a responsive chord in the heart of Father Engbring. From his childhood days, as he himself wrote to the minister general in 1888, he had cherished the desire that the good God would one day call him to the ranks of his missionaries. Here was a summons from his highest superior. Was it not the voice of God, calling him? The young professor wished to heed it at once; and he made known to his provincial superior his readiness and his desire to go to the foreign missions. But there was one great obstacle. Father Engbring's health was not that of a missionary. He was still suffering from the lung trouble which had forced him to

take a rest during the preceding year. Hence the Father Provincial advised him to defer his going to the missions till later. And so Father Engbring continued to teach philosophy.

In the summer of 1884 the young professor was promoted to the theological seminary at St. Anthony's Friary in St. Louis; and there he taught moral theology and Church history for four years.

While teaching at the friary in St. Louis, Father Xavier was also chaplain of the House of Correction, some blocks north of the friary. Later these buildings were razed, and the institution was moved to a place outside the city. Besides, he taught religion for three years to the girls at the Academy of the Sacred Heart, conducted by the Religious of the Sacred Heart and situated a short distance east of the friary. Mother Mary Reid's remembrance of the young professor is that of a man who was always thorough in his work. "He was a remarkable priest," Mother Reid told the writer, "a man of attractive appearance and kindly disposition, a real Franciscan, who put his whole heart and soul into the work assigned to him." She remembered one instance in particular in which

he gave evidence of the priestly zeal that animated him. There were several girls at the academy, children of a mixed marriage, who had not received the proper religious training in their childhood. To them Father Xavier gave special instructions and prepared them for the reception of the sacraments. On this occasion he showed that the missionary spirit was still aglow in his heart. Soon it was to burst into a bright flame and urge him to achieve great things in the field afar.

After Father Engbring had taught theology in St. Louis for four years, his training for the mission field was, in the plans of God, complete. In March, 1888, he sent a letter, written in Latin, to the minister general, asking to be sent to the foreign missions.

"During the past year," he writes, "the whole matter (of my vocation to the foreign missions) came to my mind frequently, yes daily, and my conscience was troubled. Now, after having prayed to God and having asked the prayers of many pious persons, after having considered the matter from all angles in the sight of God, I am convinced that it would be nothing less than a sin against the Holy Ghost and my own soul, should

I continue to entertain any doubt or hesitation or to postpone the execution of my resolve any longer. I feel certain that God is calling me, though most unworthy, to the work of a missionary . . . .

"To use your own words, Most Reverend Father, 'it is not to be feared that a province will suffer a great loss by the absence of one or two religious'. To my mind it is of great importance that also from our Province of the Sacred Heart, which is growing from day to day, missionaries be sent to the foreign missions. And as the example of the four Fathers of our province who have already departed for the foreign missions[2] has strongly urged me to imitate them, so it is probable that others will follow my example.

"I have not yet completed my thirty-first year and am enjoying the best of health; and, therefore, I am physically fit to undergo the hardships of mission life and to learn the Chinese language.

"I am also able to say truthfully that I have the right intention and a good will. Regarding this and other necessary requirements of a missionary,

2. Biographical sketches of these missioners are given in Chapters VII and XI.

I trust that Very Reverend Father Provincial can add his testimony.

"Besides you could consult Very Reverend Bernard Doebbing, professor at St. Isidore's College in Rome; he was my fellow student in philosophy and theology for some years.[3]

"I, therefore, ask you, Most Reverend Father, as humbly as possible, that, if it seems good to you, you may give me an appointment for missionary work in China or in any other country. Your decision, whatever it is, I will accept as that of our holy Father St. Francis, yes, even as that of God; and I will strive to carry it out most willingly."

With this letter of Father Engbring, Very Reverend Maurice Klostermann, then minister provincial, enclosed a note saying that he did not oppose the fulfillment of Father Engbring's desire, but, being a lector of sacred theology, Father Engbring would have to teach till the beginning of July.

From St. Anthony's College in Rome the minister general sent a reply on June 1. "Enclosed you will find," he wrote, "the obediences

3. Father Doebbing, O. F. M., was later consecrated Bishop of Nepi and Sutri in Italy.

both of the order and of the Sacred Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith by which Father Engbring is sent to the Chinese vicariate apostolic of southern Hunan. I am adding a commendatory letter which Father Engbring shall present to the Reverend Philip Meugniot, the procurator of the Lazarists in Shanghai, to Reverend Angelo Vandagua, procurator of our missions at Hankow, and finally, in the absence of the Right Reverend Semprini, vicar apostolic of southern Hunan, to Father Ansgar Braun, the vicar general . . . Since Father Xavier must teach till July, he is not to leave until the scholastic year has been completed."

Before leaving St. Louis, Father Engbring gave a farewell address to his pupils at the Sacred Heart Academy. Among other things he asked them to pray that he might become a martyr. They promised to fulfill his request; and some were faithful to their promise even after they graduated from school. From China Father Engbring wrote several letters to the girls at the academy in which he told them of his experiences and by means of which he kept alive their interest in his work. But these letters are, we regret to say, no longer extant.

Father Engbring also paid a last visit to his home at Effingham, Illinois, and to his alma mater at Teutopolis. One of his former fellow students, Father Hugolinus Storff, subsequently provincial for several terms and definitor general of the Franciscan order in Rome, was then teaching at St. Joseph's College, Teutopolis, Illinois. He writes of Father Engbring: "He was one course ahead of me in my studies. After we had finished our studies, we never lived together in the same house. He had a lively character, was always congenial . . . . Before leaving for China, he visited us at the college of Teutopolis, and on that occasion he tried to persuade me also to go to China. I had offered myself for the Chinese Mission when Father Vincent Halbfass was Provincial, but he refused to give me his permission. I, therefore, told Father Xavier, that it seemed to me that this was not the will of God."

CHAPTER IV

ACROSS THE WIDE PACIFIC

It was on August 11, 1888, that Father Engbring set sail from San Francisco for distant China. Of his voyage across the Pacific he has left us an interesting account in a letter to his kinsfolk which he wrote in the form of a diary:

"August 16, 1888.—We are now six days aboard ship. I was sick as death from seasickness on the very first night (Saturday), and remained so on Sunday, though I was somewhat better on Sunday afternoon, so much so that I ventured up on deck, where the cool, salty breeze of the ocean refreshed me. By Tuesday head and stomach were thoroughly accustomed to the unsteady, rolling, teeter-tottering motion of the ship and now I feel as much at home on the ship as on dry land, enjoying myself as well as that is possible aboard a steamer.

"We left San Francisco at 3 P. M., on the

Father Engbring at the time he departed for China.

eleventh. Fathers Gerard, Cornelius and Gabriel accompanied me to the wharf to bid me goodbye. Our ship, destined for Japan, belongs to the Pacific Mail Company, and is the largest of their ships, the *City of Peking*. A ship looks small when you see it sailing on the water with the ocean as its background. But alongside, it appears like a mountain. The *City of Peking* is 425 feet long, affording opportunity for a good promenade. We carry four large masts. It is something terrible to see the sailors climbing them, especially out on the cross spars when the ocean is wild and the ship is rolling. The ship carries ten huge boilers with a combined horse power of 5,000. We make a speed of twelve miles an hour.

"A Christian Brother, director of the Catholic college in Hongkong, was assigned to the same cabin with me, but as there were not too many cabin passengers, he had an unoccupied cabin assigned to him, so that during the voyage we have each a cabin to ourselves.

"There are about 300 Chinese aboard, returning to their country. A strange sight, their embarkation! When at 2:30 the bell gave the first signal for departure, a warning for friends to take leave, there were general farewells and a great

deal of weeping. One mother especially seemed heartbroken, bidding farewell to her young son—no crying, but such a look of anguish and woe that I turned away and went to the other side of the ship. My confrères had already taken leave, as it was Saturday and they had to be in the confessional in due time.

"Presently the bell sounded again, the gang-plank was drawn, and so goodbye to dear old U. S. A.! The great ship is under way. The people on shore are gesticulating wildly and waving kerchiefs. Aboard, a number of Johnny Bulls look on stolidly, while an enthusiastic Philadelphian photographs the scene. To date, the latter has photographed every person and every sight on the ship with the sole exception of the Chinese, who, as soon as he appears with his box, vanish with the agility of wild animals. They look upon him as a man of mischief, and they keep a good lookout for him!

"A beautiful sight, leaving the great harbor of San Francisco! The many ships, of every size and form and nationality; the high bluffs on all sides, dotted with pretty dwellings; the Golden Gate, with its palisades of hills on one side and the fortifications on the other. But here the

poetry of the thing stopped and the bleak prose began!

"The Golden Gate is the narrow outlet into the ocean and the current is rather strong. In consequence the ship began pitching, plunging head down into the trough of the waves, then up, then down and up, up and down, like an immense teeter-totter. At first you like it, but—presently there is the experience as of being thrown high up in a swing, an indefinable feeling in the bowels, the sensation of falling through space without hold or foundation; and as the feeling increases, it develops into those awful sensations a boy experiences when smoking his first pipe or cigar. There is nothing that can describe seasickness. Nothing but utter misery! It racks the body and fills the soul with the most gloomy thoughts. Continuous vomiting, even after the stomach has ejected everything! It seems as if that otherwise useful organ were tired of being confined in the darkness down there and were determined to get out and see what all the commotion is about.

"Only two hours out and I began to feel that something was going wrong with me. Some ten minutes later I bowed over the rails for my first tribute to Neptune. I was so sick that I went

to bed. Sick all night; continuous vomitings. No breakfast, no dinner next day. The good Christian Brother, more experienced in traveling than I, came and ordered the right diet for me. Although I had no desire to eat, he made me eat it—toast, broiled chicken and tea, made me get up and go on deck, where he established me, bed fashion, in his steamer chair. The cool, salty breeze made me feel better.

"After a little while life did not seem to be so utterly miserable, seemed at least worth living, though a few hours before I had been quite indifferent whether the ship arrived safe and sound, or went down to the bottom of the ocean. I passed a tolerable night, and felt no further inconvenience. Only once, on the fifteenth, the ship began pitching and rolling at the same time. The dreaded seasickness was coming on again. Only heroic measures overcame it. I got my rubber coat, went on deck, although it was raining hard, and continued walking up and down for two hours. That killed it. There were only a few passengers at breakfast the following morning. Even the good brother, who is a veritable globe-trotter, was missing. It was my turn to visit and comfort!

"It is a funny sight to see the passengers on deck when the sea is rolling. The only way to save oneself from being thrown is to straddle as widely as possible; and if the deck is wet, it is liable to rise right up of a sudden and hit you, as I learned from a few sad experiences.

"August 7.—One day like the other. No change, but that it is becoming more rainy, more foggy, and very cold.

"Japan lies in the same degree of latitude as California, and consequently it caused no little astonishment to hear that we were taking a northerly instead of due westerly course, and that we should continue the course as far as 45° latitude. The reason that they give is that the arched course saves some two hundred miles of way. It seems paradoxical that a curved line should be shorter than the straight, yet it can be easily understood if one considers how the earth converges toward the north, making the degrees shorter and shorter the farther one goes north.

"Our steamer takes the direct route to China, touching only at Japan. Almost all the other ships go by way of the Sandwich Islands. We make an average of 270 miles a day, and it will take in all eighteen days to get to Japan. Today

I was told that it will be necessary for me to change steamers at Yokohama, as the *City of Peking* does not put in at Shanghai, my destination, but goes straight to Hongkong. I shall have to take a ship of the Japan Steamship Company, which leaves Yokohama on Tuesdays, arriving at Shanghai the next Tuesday, a voyage of seven days and nights. Our ship is expected to arrive at Yokohama on Wednesday afternoon, or, if the bad weather continues, Thursday, forcing me to delay in Japan six days. Thus the voyage will mean: From San Francisco to Japan, eighteen days; in Japan, six days; from Japan to Shanghai, seven days—a total of thirty-one days.

"August 18.—Nothing but fog and rain! There are some twenty-two cabin passengers, of whom two are remaining invisible the whole time—seasick! What a miserable journey it must be for them.

"Today a ship is seen north of us. Only the sails are visible. It is presumed to be a whaler, returning from the north. The first and only ship sighted since leaving the coast! The Pacific Ocean is aptly likened to a desert; it is a watery waste, no ships, very few fishes, only from time

to time a whale blowing in the distance. I have been on the lookout for the latter but so far without success.

"Sunday (August 19).—'Service at ten o'clock. All cordially invited!' I did not attend and was not expected to do so, as almost all know that I am a Catholic priest. I am treated on all sides with courtesy. After a few days on ship, especially where there are so few passengers, everybody becomes acquainted with everybody else. There is a family which is doing a tour around the world; they have visited Alaska, are going now to Japan, then on, hoping to be in Paris in the spring. They with the gentleman from Philadelphia are seated at the captain's table. The table at which the first officer presides is called the missionaries' table. On every steamer there are Protestant missionaries for Japan and the seaports of China. The Christian Brother, myself, two Protestant missionaries, and two young ladies who mean to become missionaries, occupy the table. The third table, presided over by the purser, is occupied by an Italian consul and several young Englishmen, evidently cadets for British men-of-war.

"The missionaries are looked down upon and

spoken of contemptuously. I am told that such is the case all over the East. They do not seem to be over-educated, while without exception the other passengers speak three or four languages, which holds of almost all travelers in these parts. Personally I am on good terms with the missionaries.

"Tuesday-Wednesday.—Coming to table today, I found the menu marked 'Wednesday'. By all right and reason it should have been Tuesday, and I pointed out the supposed mistake to the officer. Smilingly he explained that during the night we had crossed the line separating the West from the East, and as in the nature of things a day is lost when traveling west across the ocean, it is necessary somewhere to skip a day and take up the Eastern day. Hence instead of Tuesday we had Wednesday. It was awkward for me, as I had recited Matins and Lauds for Tuesday. It will remain the shortest week of my life—only six days. Coming back, it is necessary to add a day for a like reason, making it a week of eight days.

"Nothing new all week! Everybody reads and reads. Sometimes the piano is played, and when the weather permits, there are games on deck.

"Sighted two whales about a mile out. Only

the black hulk of the back and the tail could be seen, scarcely distinguishable from the water. The only living thing seen besides an occasional fish are the albatrosses which have followed us steadily, resting seemingly nowhere, these 3,000 miles. They can move with immense rapidity without seeming to stir their wings, as if floating on the air.

"August 25.—We are going southwest now, down the arch of our course to Japan. We are to arrive at Yokohama Wednesday afternoon. Not one of the passengers but ardently desires land. Fourteen long days and nights with nothing but sky, water and ship, and still four days and nights before we shall see land!

"We are some hundred miles farther south. Up north I had to put on double underwear and an overcoat. Now everybody dresses as lightly as possible. The waiters today appeared at table in white from head to foot. The officers, too, are wearing white with the blue, some passengers also taking to white.

"Wednesday, August 29.—It is raining terribly, and it is impossible to see farther than a mile at best. Today we were to see land, but it is now ten o'clock and no land in sight. The wind has

been against us and we shall not be in the harbor before nine or ten this evening, meaning we must remain aboard till tomorrow.

"The screw has stopped suddenly. The officers say that as they could not take observations yesterday afternoon and this morning because of cloudiness, they must now get their bearings, as it is only a few miles from shore and they cannot proceed without being perfectly sure of the locality lest they run upon the hidden rocks which are so plentiful near the Japanese shore."

CHAPTER V

IN THE LAND OF THE RISING SUN

Father Engbring continues his journal and describes his arrival in Japan and his stay in that country:

"Land! Wednesday afternoon, after eighteen long dreary days! The news passed quickly through the ship. Everybody was up on deck, to see an indistinct dark line away off on the horizon, which the captain declared was land. We believed it gladly enough, though it had the appearance of only a light cloud over the water.

"After a half hour the land became more distinct. We could discern mountains, ravines, little bays and capes. At 4 P. M. we were so near that we could distinguish trees, houses, villages, fishermen at their nets.

"The sight was something so novel, delightful and interesting that the steward with difficulty, and only after warning us twice with his tomtom,

could induce us to leave the deck and take dinner. At five o'clock we entered the bay, and were making for Yokohama some thirty miles up.

"After dinner everybody was again on deck. On both sides stood the hills, with the mountains a little farther off and looking over the shoulders of their smaller brothers at the newcomers. Craft of every description surrounded us. Nestling among the hills, the fishermen's huts formed pretty villages. Everything was green and bright. Not a spot on the hills and mountains but was covered with bright green grass or short dark-green trees. All on deck were of the opinion that the like they had never seen.

"As Japan is so densely populated, every foot of land is cultivated; the hills, to gain space, being cut in terraces to their very summits. Everywhere flowers of all colors. The Japanese love flowers to an extent which to a European's prosy taste seems childish. They will plant five rows of cabbages or other vegetables in a square of ten feet and surround the plot with a row of flowers. The effect is pleasing. On all sides was heard the declaration that Japan is the most beautiful country of the world. Even the Italian consul admitted, though somewhat reluctantly,

that it is more picturesque than his own sunny home. Someone made the remark that all this raving about beautiful, most beautiful, perfectly delightful was nothing but the reaction natural after the absence of land for so long a time. But the captain, who has seen quite everything worth seeing, interposed with the declaration that, continuously passing to and fro between America and Japan and China as he did, he was able and ready to say that nothing in the States or elsewhere could compare with it. 'Now look toward the south,' he continued, 'and tell me whether you have seen the like in all your life!'

"Turning with him, we certainly did see a sight the likes of which we had never seen and no other country can boast. It was Fujiyama, the glory and pride of the Japanese, rising from the level of the sea, an immense mountain, lifting its snow-crowned head into the very heavens, some fourteen thousand feet high, in solitary grandeur. Other mountains rise on increasingly high plateaus, above which they lift themselves some four or five thousand feet. But Fujiyama grows up as it were from the ocean level, rising and rising until the eye almost loses its height. The peak is always snow-capped. It impresses the

most callous. The blasé traveler, who has seen everything and is sick of sightseeing, feels his pulse quicken. No one any longer spoke of 'beautiful' or 'perfectly delightful'; everybody felt that words only weakened the truth.

"New scenes kept claiming the attention, but every little while one looked instinctively back on the snow-white giant. Sometimes a cloud would stretch its length across the brow, and then there was a picture such as only the Creator can paint: Below, the deep blue cloud, changing to purple, then to bright red, with a delicate, lace-like fringe of dazzling gold, sheaves of fire, like an aureole, branching out at top and sides; and above the whole glorious mass loomed the snowy white top!

"After an hour's ride we entered the harbor. It had grown dark and the land could no longer be seen. Instead there were thousands of lights on every side and on the many boats, darting forward and backward. The ship moved very slowly now, and at last, about two miles from shore, the anchors were let down. I hear that ships never go near the shore, as it is too shallow. Two cannons were fired aboard; then followed sky-rockets of different colors—red, white and

green in succession. This was the signal for the people of Yokohama that the American mail had arrived.

"In a few moments the ship was surrounded by a number of little boats. Steam launches, looking exactly like the little tug boats one sees in Chicago or Milwaukee, came to take ashore passengers for the hotels. As it was almost ten o'clock, most of the passengers decided to remain aboard for the night and the launches returned almost empty. The little boats, called *sampans*, came to receive passengers who did not intend to go to a hotel. Two men, sometimes a man and a boy, would manage a sampan. They take twenty cents for the use of the boat for an hour, charging ten cents to go to shore.

"August 30.—I rose early to celebrate holy Mass. Then, after giving some orders regarding the transfer of my baggage to the line that was to carry me to China, I prepared to go ashore.

"Owing to the darkness, I had seen nothing the night before but the lights, and the boats that came alongside. Now the whole city stretched along the shore, losing itself among the hills in the background. The harbor was filled with ships. There were two American men-of-

war, their portholes menacing with grim-looking cannon. Just ahead of us were two Japanese warships of steel, besides a large number of steamers of English, French and German lines.

"Yokohama is a treaty port, in which foreigners are allowed to transact business, acquire property and live under their own law, at least with the right to have judges of their own nationality and jurisdiction. Most of the foreigners in these ports are wealthy and have surrounded themselves with all the comforts and luxuries that wealth and civilization can afford. They have great stone buildings with spacious balconies supported by stone columns, all of which, with the well kept and extensive gardens, make an imposing appearance. The most expensive of these buildings range themselves side by side for a mile or so along the front street, facing the ocean. Opposite them, toward the ocean and running parallel with the asphalt street, is a narrow park, perhaps one hundred and fifty feet broad, with lawns of the brightest green grass, beautiful walks and shady trees. A wall of solid masonry protects it from the ocean the entire length of the street.

"This was the picture that greeted my eyes

when I stood on deck. It was hard to believe that Yokohama was a Japanese and not rather a European or American harbor city.

"I requested one of the crew to engage a boat to take me ashore. 'Hey sampan, sampan!' he bellowed with a terrific voice, and in a trice some ten sampans were struggling to be the first to the ship. I took the winner, and after settling the price, sat down with the little baggage I took along, in a very commodious boat. It was somewhat rough-built, but it is the best craft for service here, where the waves often rise to heights which would upset boats like ours. Rarely, the sailors told me, does a sampan swamp. A man and a little boy propelled the sampan, not by rowing but by keeping their oars moving from side to side in the water. They drove the sampan very rapidly, and it took only a few minutes to make the half mile to shore. Reddish color, a mass of jet black, straggling hair and a scarcity of clothes, were the characteristics of my oarsmen—indeed the scarcity was scarcely nice, being nature's own make.

"Reaching shore, I found my way to the French Foreign Missionaries, who have a large

parish and a beautiful church here. Learning that the American mail was to leave Yokohama for America the next day, August 31, and not again till September 7, I hurriedly posted a few lines (to my parents)."

CHAPTER VI

INTO THE HEART OF CHINA

After a week's stay in Yokohama, on the 7th of September, Father Engbring was able to embark again and arrived at Shanghai in China eleven days later, September 18. Thence he sailed up the great Yangtze river to Hankow in the province of Hupeh. From this city, which is situated in the very heart of China, he wrote the following letter to America:

"Hankow, September 20, 1888.

"I had to remain in Yokohama six days, waiting to take the *Tokio Maru* of the Japanese Steamship Company for Shanghai, as my former ship (the *City of Peking*) went directly to Hongkong. The first two days I felt rather ill, as I had unwisely ventured forth in the hot sun for a walk without a parasol, a thing that is liable to prove injurious to anyone who is not

acclimated. So I had plenty of time on my hands, and the good Fathers of the French mission with whom I stayed gave me every opportunity and assistance to get acquainted with the country and its people.

"On September 7, I was able to leave Yokohama, and after a stormy voyage of eleven days (instead of seven) I arrived in Shanghai. There I met a hearty welcome at the hands of the Lazarist Fathers, from whom I learned that I could go by steamer straight to Hankow, which is, by river, about eight hundred miles in the interior. This was very agreeable news, for I had believed that the journey from Shanghai to the interior would have to be made in a small boat. Hankow is in the province of Hupeh on the Yangtze or Blue River. The Franciscans have a great center there, in charge of the business affairs of twenty diocesan districts.[1] Whatever comes from Europe or America, such as money,

1. Strictly speaking, "vicariates apostolic" which are similar to dioceses in Christian countries. Vicariates apostolic are subject to the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda in Rome, and are governed by vicars apostolic. The latter as a rule receive episcopal consecration, being made titular bishops, that is, bishops of dioceses which existed formerly but are now extinct.

letters or chests of wares, is sent to Hankow and distributed from that point through reliable private messengers, for China has no railroads, post offices, or express, and everybody must look out for himself in such matters.[2]

"In Hankow I find a Franciscan confrère whom I well knew in America—Father Athanasius Goette. He has taken sick and his bishop has sent him to Hankow, where he can have the benefit of better care than in his mission.

"I shall have to remain about a month in Hankow, to rest from the journey and to grow acclimated. Here, too, I shall make my metamorphosis to Chinese clothes and get my passport from Peking, allowing me to enter the interior of the country. But the main reason for my stay here is that without a good and trustworthy escort it will be impossible for me to make the journey of approximately six hundred miles from Hankow to Henchowfu in Hunan. Our Father Procurator wrote the bishop of

2. These words, it must be remembered were written in 1888; since that time postal service in China has been improved considerably.

Hunan[3] when I arrived, asking him to send an escort for me, and it will be fully thirty days before they can put in their appearance. Everything moves slowly in China, and I have no hope of being at my destination until the middle of November.

"Dear parents, I am well and hearty, and there is no reason for misgivings on my behalf. The only trouble I have thus far is an inflammation of the eyes, due to my inexperience in Chinese weather and ways of living, among other things having the head shaved à *la Chinoise.* In consequence the doctor has forbidden me to read or write, and I suppose I shall have to follow his directions for a few weeks, though I am making an exception with this letter to you. Though I often think of you, father and mother, and of home, yet I have never felt a bit of homesickness. It does not seem to be in me. Give my hearty greetings to all the folks, and to the Fathers."

3. The bishop to whom reference is made was Bishop Eusebius Semprini, O. F. M., vicar apostolic of South Hunan. At the time of Father Engbring's arrival in Hankow, however, this bishop was absent on a trip to Rome. The procurator's message, therefore, was sent to the vicar general of southern Hunan, Father Ansgar Braun, O. F. M. Later, as we shall see, Father Engbring himself held the position of procurator apostolic at Hankow, and that at a very critical time.

Father Athanasius Goette, O. F. M., whom Father Engbring met in Hankow and who in 1905 became the first American bishop in China.

While Father Engbring is waiting in Hankow on his way to Hunan, let us roll away the veil of time and briefly survey the surrounding country in other days. At the time of Father Engbring's arrival here, Hankow was not the headquarters of a vicariate. These headquarters were in the capital city of Wuchang, across the Yangtze river. The vicar apostolic residing there had jurisdiction over all of eastern Hupeh. Only some three and one half decades before (1856), a Franciscan vicariate comprising the entire province of Hupeh had been established. In 1870 this vicariate was divided into three: eastern, northwestern and southwestern Hupeh. Since 1924 the two latter are known as the vicariates of Laohokow and Ichang respectively.

The former vicariate of eastern Hupeh has been divided into five independent missions. In 1924 the original vicariate was named after the city of Hankow where its headquarters were established; and three new prefectures, those of Wuchang, Hanyang and Puchi were formed. In 1929 another independent mission, that of Hwangchow, was separated from the Hankow vicariate and committed to Franciscans of the

province of Trent who had been laboring in these parts since 1922.[4]

When Wuchang was made a prefecture apostolic, it was already in the care of American Franciscans. Hanyang too had already been entrusted to Missionaries of St. Columban, when it was made a prefecture. Subsequently both Wuchang and Hanyang were raised to the rank of vicariates apostolic. The newly established prefecture of Puchi was ceded to native priests, and the Chinese Franciscan, Father Odoric Cheng, became its first prefect apostolic. He was in fact the first native of modern China to be promoted to such a position. He was preceded, however, by one native of the past who was a bishop—the Right Reverend Gregory Lo, O. P. (known also by the Spanish name Lopez), titular bishop of Basilea and vicar apostolic of Nanking in the latter part of the seventeenth century.[5] Together with another Chinese Franciscan, Father Aloysius Chen, appointed vicar apostolic of Fenyang, Shansi, and four other Chinese

4. Gubbels, O. F. M., Natalis: *Ordo Genealogicus Missionum Sinensium* in *Acta Ordinis Fratrum Minorum* XLVII (1928), p. 216—217.

5. D'Elia, S. J., Paschal M.: *Catholic Native Episcopacy in China* (Shanghai, 1927).

priests, Father Odoric Cheng received episcopal consecration from the Holy Father himself in Rome on October 28, 1926. Returning to China, Bishop Cheng passed through the United States. He died on November 14, 1928.[6] "He will be remembered in Occidental lands too, we trust," wrote *The Commonweal* of April 3, 1929, "long after the apostolate in China has been confided entirely to a native clergy, as the bishop who called himself a 'little younger brother' of the missionaries."

The missions of eastern Hupeh grew rapidly. Western Hupeh, however, especially the southwestern part of the province, inasmuch as it has been a bloody battle-field, bears a striking resemblance to Father Engbring's first field of labor, the province of Hunan, of which we shall speak later. In the vicariate of southwestern Hupeh (Ichang) nine Belgian Franciscans have lost their lives during the period from 1898 to 1929. Father Victorin Delbrouck heads the list, having suffered martyrdom for the Faith in 1898. Six years later (1904) the vicar apostolic of this vicariate, Bishop Theotim Verhaegen, together

6. *Acta Ordinis Fratrum Minorum,* XLVI, p. 74. His confrère, Bishop Chen of Fenyang, Shansi, died in 1930.

with his brother Father Frederick Verhaegen and Father Florence Robberecht met a similar fate. The process of beatification for these four martyred missioners has been introduced in Rome. On January 16, 1922, Father Julian Adons, one of four brothers of the same family—all Franciscan missioners in the vicariate of Ichang, was slain by a horde of religious fanatics, who fell upon him, while in the mission of Litchoan, and also killed all the resident Christians. The sixth on this list of heroes is Father Tiburce Cloodts, who was killed in his mission of Fong-shan-kang, August 25, 1929, by three bandits, who were enraged because the good Father had but fifteen dollars in his possession. A week later, September 9, another vicar apostolic of Ichang, Bishop Trudo Jans, and Fathers Bruno Van Weert and Rupert Fynaerts were ruthlessly clubbed to death by "spirit soldiers" at Siaotang.[7]

Undaunted by these outrages, seven more Franciscans of the Belgian province and two from

7. The slaying of these missionaries raised the number of those killed in China during the year 1929 to eight, and during the entire period of unrest since 1923 to twenty-two. In this long list of mission heroes we find the names of seven Franciscans, the very first being Father Angelico Melotto, O. F. M., a veteran missionary of eastern Hupeh.

Lorraine arrived in the vicariate of Ichang at the end of 1929, the Franciscans of Lorraine having accepted a portion of this territory as their particular mission field. A month after the cruel murder of Bishop Jans and his companions, on October 6, Father Angelo Timmers, a veteran missionary of this vicariate, celebrated his golden jubilee as a Franciscan. He was a fellow missioner of the nine heroes, whose names we have just enumerated. When he arrived in southwestern Hupeh, where he has labored as a missioner for forty years, this vicariate had but 3,500 Catholics; in 1930 it had more than 35,000.

Father Engbring himself will one day return to Hupeh and distinguish himself by his many and great labors in this province.

CHAPTER VII

THREE MISSIONARY BROTHERS

In the letter which Father Engbring wrote from Hankow he mentions the fact that he met there a confrère, Father Athanasius Goette, O. F. M., whom he knew well in America. Though Father Engbring was the first native American priest to go to China as a missionary, he was not the first to leave our shores for that pagan land. In point of fact he was preceded by four other Franciscans; and three of these were brothers of the same family. We shall meet the fourth in a later chapter; but before we accompany Father Engbring to Hunan, we shall get acquainted with the three missionary brothers.

The four Franciscan missionaries who preceded Father Engbring were: Fathers Remy Goette, Athanasius Goette, John Capistran Goette and Edmund Roediger. All of these had come to the

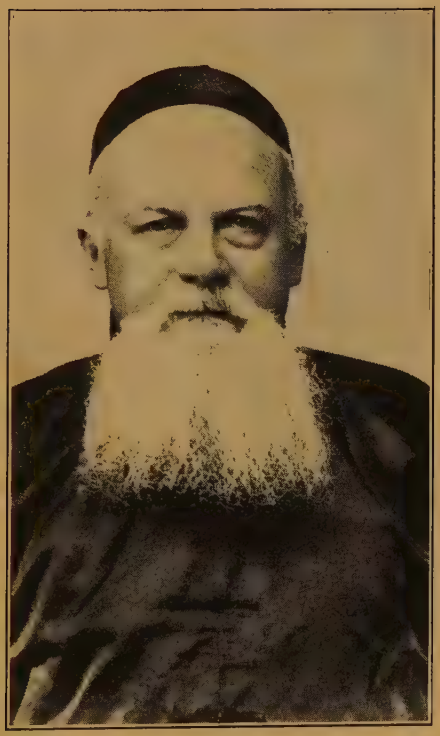
United States, when the friars were driven from Germany during the so-called Kulturkampf in 1875; and all of them except Father Remy Goette had become members of the American Franciscan Province of the Sacred Heart before their departure for China.

Father Remy Goette, who received the name of Joseph in Baptism, was born at Paderborn, Germany, April 27, 1856. He entered the Franciscan order at Warendorf, Germany, in October, 1873, and the following year pronounced his first vows. In May, 1875, he came to the United States in the company of his two younger brothers who were still novices at the time. In the Middle West he completed his philosophical and theological studies. Being a classmate of Father Engbring, he received the various ordinations at the same time as Father Engbring. January 22, 1881, the year following his ordination to the holy priesthood, he set sail from San Francisco for Yokohama on the *Gaelic* of the Oriental and Occidental Steamship Company. In order to save money he made the long voyage of three weeks to Yokohama in steerage, suffering great hardships on the way. On the *Tokio Maru*

he continued his voyage to Shanghai; thence he sailed up the Yangtze to Hankow, where he arrived in early March. In a letter written on October 10, 1881, to Very Reverend Vincent Halbfass, Minister Provincial of the Sacred Heart Province in the United States, he declares that he was glad to hear that his classmate, Father Engbring, was appointed teacher of philosophy. "A better man," he says, "could not have been selected for the position."

During the first years of his missionary life, Father Remy labored in the vicariate of eastern Hupeh. The same year in which Father Engbring came to China (1888), Father Remy returned from Europe, whither he had gone to regain his health and to acquire means to carry on his missionary work, and was assigned to the field of northwestern Hupeh. Later he was transferred back to eastern Hupeh, where he labored till his death.

Including the time spent in a trip to his native country, Father Remy devoted thirty-nine of the sixty-four years of his life as a zealous and successful missionary in the province of Hupeh.



Father Remy Goette, O. F. M., the first priest to go to China from the United States and the founder of Catholic American missions in China.

He died at Hankow on July 31, 1920, having survived both of his younger brothers.[1]

Though Father Remy retained his membership in the German Franciscan Province of the Holy Cross, which revived in Germany after the Kulturkampf, he was really the first Catholic priest to go as a missionary to China from the United States; and we may rightly call him the founder of American Catholic missions in China.

His brother, Father Athanasius, who followed him to China a year later, was a member of the American Franciscan Province of the Sacred Heart with headquarters formerly in St. Louis and now in Chicago; and he has the distinction of being our country's first bishop in China. Born at Paderborn April 11, 1857, he received as his Baptismal name William. He entered the Franciscan order with his younger brother, Friar John Capistran, at Warendorf, October 13, 1874. Their good parents thought at the time that the

1. In his *History of Christian Missions in China* (published by Macmillan Co. in 1929), p. 720, Dr. K. S. Latourette writes: "The Rev. Remigius Goette, a Franciscan from Sacred Heart Province (St. Louis), went to Hsianfu in 1882 and in 1905 was created Vicar Apostolic of Northern Shensi." This statement stands corrected above. The missionary to whom Dr. Latourette refers is Father Athanasius Goette, a brother of Father Remigius or Remy.

lads were going to Warendorf merely to visit their older brother, Friar Remy; but they failed to return home—they had gone to stay. The following year they came to the United States, where they continued their novitiate and pronounced their first vows.

After completing his philosophical and theological studies, Friar Athanasius was ordained to the holy priesthood in St. Louis on June 5, 1881. On May 1 of the next year he left St. Louis for the missions of China, journeying over New York, Hamburg, Rome, Brindisi, Alexandria, Suez, Aden, Colombo, Hongkong and Shanghai to Hankow. At the latter city he arrived on August 29 of the same year, after four months of travel. But he still had to make a voyage of almost three months on a Chinese boat and a journey of ten days on mule-back before he reached his destination, Sianfu, Shensi. Finally he reached Sianfu on January 6, 1883.

Learning the Chinese language caused him no difficulties; and he commenced his missionary activity already after four months. In the course of the two decades of his career as a plain missionary, he labored in almost all parts of the vicariate. He baptized some 1500 adults; and

more than 16,000 pagan children received Baptism from him and his helpers. Between 1894 and 1896 he spent some time in California to regain his health, which had suffered in China. In 1901 he journeyed in the company of his younger brother, Father Capistran, to America and Europe, to gather alms for his poor missions. With funds received from Europe and America he was able to build nine respectable churches and eight chapels of considerable size. In 1905 he again went to Europe by way of America. While tarrying in his native country, on September 26, 1905, he was appointed vicar apostolic of northern Shensi; and on November 30, Bishop William Schneider consecrated him titular bishop of Lampa in the cathedral of Paderborn, where he had been baptized forty-eight years before. Thus Father Athanasius became the first American bishop in China.[2]

After his consecration, Bishop Goette returned

2. Since he was born in Germany, however, Bishop Goette was not the first native American bishop in China. Just as Father Engbring was the first native American priest in China, so the first native American bishop in China is Bishop James Edward Walsh of Maryknoll, who was born at Cumberland, Maryland, in 1891, went to Yeunkong, southeastern China in the fall of 1918, and was made vicar apostolic of Kongmoon in 1924.

to his mission by way of America. In early February, 1906, he visited his American brethren in St. Louis. In the beginning of May he arrived in Shensi and received a grand reception such as few bishops in Christian lands receive on entering their diocese.

During his short career as bishop he built a spacious hospital with a convent for the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of Mary who were placed in charge of the hospital, a large orphanage, a minor seminary with room for sixty boys, and two schools of foreign languages; moreover, he enlarged the major seminary and thoroughly renovated the principal residences at Tung-yuen-fang and at Sianfu.

During the first two weeks of March, 1908, he was host to the fourth synod of the second ecclesiastical region of China, comprising eight vicariates, which convened at his residence in the town of Tung-yuen-fang near Sianfu. During the synod a typhoid fever epidemic broke out; and after the synod was concluded, Bishop Goette insisted on personally nursing the sick. Often during his missionary career Bishop Goette's life was threatened; but he always

confronted the danger unafraid and each time escaped death. This time, however, his weakened condition could not withstand the dread disease. Two weeks after the close of the synod, on March 29, 1908, he died a martyr of charity at Tung-yuen-fang, only fifty-one years old.

Father John Capistran, whose Baptismal name was Henry, was the third of the Goette brothers who became a Franciscan and a missionary in China. Born at Paderborn, March 2, 1859, he was ordained to the holy priesthood in St. Louis, May 28, 1882, a year after Father Athanasius' ordination. April 26, 1884, he departed from the United States for China by way of Europe. Father Edmund Roediger, a classmate of his, was his companion. In Rome they were examined in theology by Professor Agliardi, the later Cardinal. France was at war with Annam, one of the countries of Indo-China at this time; and the two missionaries found it difficult to procure a China-bound vessel. Reaching Port Said, they could not continue their voyage for some time, and so they visited the Holy Land. A French ship carried them from Port Said to Hongkong. From there they sailed on a mail steamer to Shanghai. Thence to Hankow, where they were

delayed for two more months. Only on December 9, 1884, did they reach their destination, Henchowfu, southern Hunan. In this mission field they were joined by Father Engbring in 1888.

For five years, Father John Capistran, who was also an organist of no mean ability, taught dogmatic theology to the Chinese seminarians of the Henchowfu mission and was chaplain of this vicariate's orphanage. The unhealthful climate of Hunan, however, impaired his health and made a transfer to northern China imperative. Accordingly, as his obedience directed him, he went to Shensi, where his brother, Father Athanasius was engaged in missionary work, arriving there in May, 1890. The very next year, when Bishop Amatus Pagnucci, vicar apostolic of northern Shensi, was prevented by sickness from presiding at the third synod of the second ecclesiastical region of China, held at Tung-yuen-fang, Father John Capistran was appointed representative of his bishop.

In 1895 Father John Capistran was cruelly maltreated by a band of fanatical pagans and all but put to death. His brother, Bishop Goette, describes the occurrence in the following words:

"To Father Capistran was reserved the privilege of being the first Franciscan who has bled for the Faith in this province. In October, 1895, while taking a walk, not far from his mission Peh-ying-li, he was attacked by a number of pagans and maltreated in a cruel manner. The mob threw him on the ground, and, using his cue as a rope, dragged him for the distance of almost a mile to the little town of Tazuang. On the way they gave him countless kicks and blows. When the pagans noticed him whispering prayers, they took handfuls of dust from the road and stuffed them into his mouth; he almost died of suffocation. Having arrived in Tazuang, they tied him by his cue to the criminal's post in such a way that only the tips of his toes touched the ground. A gun directed at him failed to go off; otherwise the bullet would have put an end to his life. Then they began to beat him with clubs and the shafts of lances. One burly fellow hit him violently over the head with an iron rod, so that Father Capistran became unconscious. Disjointing of the fingers and other tortures, however, soon restored him to his senses. Then they untied him and were on the point of piercing him to death like one slaughters a hog. But

one of the authorities of the village, fearing the consequences, hindered the outrage. Again using his cue as a rope, the ruffians dragged Father Capistran to a well, intending to drown him. They were on the point of shoving the missionary into the well, when he succeeded in grasping with his hand a little tree growing at the edge of the well. Though they struck his hand with the flat blade of knives and with sticks, he held fast to it. At the moment when he again lost consciousness, help arrived. The pagans fled, and Father Capistran was carried back to his mission more dead than alive. For three days he hovered between life and death. All his clothes were soaked with blood; and only by cutting them into little pieces, could they be removed from his wounded body. Forty-seven larger wounds were counted. True, Father Capistran did not become (that is, die) a martyr; but the consequences of this terrible maltreatment have not been wanting. A painful headache tortures him frequently and makes it difficult for him to fulfill his vocational duties. None the less, he continues to labor untiringly for the salvation of immortal souls. He has built five beautiful churches and God alone knows how many pagan children have found the

way to Heaven through the work of the men and women sent out by him to baptize them."[3]

Despite his weakened condition, Father John Capistran continued to labor zealously till August 1, 1919, when he died at Siasniu, Shensi. Of the sixty years of his life, he devoted thirty-five to missionary work. As we shall see presently, it was Father John Capistran who came to Hankow and conducted Father Engbring to his first field of labor in China.[4]

3. From Bishop Goette's letter to Very Rev. Cyprian Banscheid. Provincial of the Sacred Heart Province, dated Sianfu. January 20. 1908. The letter is in the provincial archives at St. Anthony's Friary, St. Louis.

4. The 1926 *Catalogus* of the Province of the Sacred Heart (p. 20) refers to these pioneer missioners in the following terms:

"Among the missionaries some stand out preeminently for their heroic labors and untiring zeal for the salvation of souls, exercised for the space of many years: . . . among the Chinese, the Right Reverend Athanasius Goette, who having labored from the year 1882 in the missions of North Shensi with great zeal and spiritual fruit, was created bishop of that vicariate in 1905, and, worn out by his labors, was snatched away by death already in 1908; besides, Father Francis Xavier Engbring, who, after devoting himself to various and great labors for ten years in the vicariates of Hunan and Hupeh, died in 1895; finally, Father John Capistran Goette, who, having been a successful missionary for thirty-six years (including the year in which the voyage to China was made), passed from this life in the vicariate of North Shensi in 1919."

The *Catalogus* of 1913 (p. 17) speaks of certain missionaries who were still living at that time (among them Father John Capistran) as "religious men, by zeal and virtue shining as models for the younger friars and future missionaries."

CHAPTER VIII

TRAVELING IN CHINA

After Father Engbring had waited and rested in Hankow for about a month, the escort from Hunan arrived. His American confrère, Father John Capistran Goette, was at the head of the party. And so, at the end of October, 1888, Father Engbring entered upon the last leg of his long journey. It was the most inconvenient and unpleasant part of the way. About the middle of November, they arrived at Henchowfu, Hunan, which lies south of Hankow.

After a few days of rest, Father Engbring was sent to the Catholic village of Peshang, ten miles north of Henchowfu, where he was to learn the Chinese language. From this place he wrote the following letter to his relatives in the States:

"Peshang, November 25, 1888.

"After along and dreary journey from Hankow, I have arrived at the place destined to be my

home for some time. It has taken three and a half months to get here since my departure from San Francisco.

"The inflammation of my eyes has passed, and at the moment I am as healthy as I could wish. At Hankow I was joined by Father Capistran Goette, a fellow Franciscan and a brother of Father Athanasius, who belongs to the same mission of Hunan to which I belong. Thus I had on the journey to Hunan the comfort of at least one person who could understand me and whom I could understand.

"A boat was hired for our exclusive use. It was six or eight feet wide and very long, with two immense sails. A captain and four sailors managed it. A little cabin was prepared for us. It contained only two shelf-like bunks on either side, with a narrow passage between them, and was so small that I was obliged to double up a little when sleeping. When the wind was strong, the ship, on account of its immense sails, would lie over on one side, and in consequence the law of gravitation would prove stronger than all our efforts to remain in bed. The height of our room corresponded to its width. To move about I was compelled to stoop so low that after the first day

I found that crawling would be more convenient, and less dangerous for the head.

"As there were no chairs, and even if there had been, the dimensions of the cabin would not have permitted their use, we were obliged to squat as the Turks and Japs are wont to do. It would have been intolerable if sometimes we could not have gone out fore to take an upright position.

"When the wind was favorable, we made good progress,—one day, ninety miles. But with the exception of two days, we had contrary weather. Then at times the sailors would shove the craft along by means of long bamboo poles, using as runway a narrow platform that ran along either side from stem to stern. As, however, this method of propelling was hard and trying, it was not often resorted to, but only when the following means could not be used: A long rope was fastened to the mast and the four sailors would go ashore and tow the craft in the way that canal boats are drawn.

"Naturally under the circumstances and also on account of the pirates that infest the rivers of China, at least in the interior, there was no possibility of progress during the night. Toward

evening all the ships which were headed upstream would stop at some village and huddle as closely together as possible, for their protection during the night. A watch of two boats with armed men would row up and down alongside, ready to arouse the voyagers at the suspicion of thieves or pirates.

"Our ship went up the river in company with two hundred and ten others, and we kept together until we came to Lake Tungting, where a number took another direction. The number of river craft in these streams is beyond all calculation. The city of Hankow alone has nine thousand large (large according to Chinese notions) vessels, not counting the greater number of smaller ones.

"One afternoon our boat ran aground on a sand bar. Night came and we had not gotten away. The captain grew very excited. After a while Father Capistran engaged him in conversation, and soon he calmed down, and began to laugh and joke. Father had told him that I had a terrible gun which could shoot as fast as I could move my fingers, and that he had two guns almost as good. It was nine o'clock when Father Capistran asked me to fire my revolver as fast as I could, after which he would do the same. Twelve shots

followed as quickly as we could manage, and any lurking enemies could take them as a signal that there were twelve men with firearms aboard, all set for an attack.

"About midnight a sailor on guard spied a large boat coming towards us. Father Capistran was awakened, and he fired a few shots in the direction but into the water. Immediately the other boat turned and went away. As it had no lights, it was evidently not a vessel of honest people. The pirates never attack when they know there are firearms or soldiers aboard a ship.

"The following day we passed a city, on the walls of which four human heads were exposed, dangling by the hair. A ghastly sight! The heads of pirates! At another city I saw two heads, but we could not learn the reason for their execution.

"The worst possible test of our patience came when strong adverse winds happened to arise. As the ships cannot be drawn then, the vessel remained in harbor while the wind lasted, which might be for a day, or even two to five days. In the meantime we could not go fore for our stretch, as there was more or less constant danger of being mobbed by the lawless element that loafs

Father John Capistran Goette, O. F. M., who escorted Father Engbring to Hunan and later was the first American missionary in China to be martyred for the Faith.

at the river fronts. The crews of other boats never say anything, as they have seen Europeans in Shanghai and other ports as far as Hankow. But on the way up the river, as soon as a *Yan-Kuitse* (that is 'European devil'—they hiss the '*tse*') shows himself, it is an event for the land population. The news spreads like wildfire, and in a few minutes thousands swarm about the ship. It is the same thing up here where I am now. In the villages where we are not known, there is danger for life and limb, but where the people know us they are respectful, sometimes even kind.

"All in all, the journey from Hankow was the most dreary, annoying and dangerous I have thus far experienced, and I am very glad it is over at last.

"I arrived in Henchowfu in the middle of November, and was honorably received amid the discharge of a thousand firecrackers. After recuperating for a few days I was sent to this place by the vicar general to learn Chinese.

"Peshang is some ten miles north of Henchowfu. It is a small village, the population being mostly Christians, and having been such for some two hundred and fifty years. They were converted

about 1630 A. D., by the Franciscans of the time, and have remained faithful during all the persecutions and changes of these years. They are very pious, and devoted to the Fathers.

"Their parish priest is a Chinese named Tsen, and his first assistant is Lin Shen Fu (*shen fu* means 'father' or 'priest'). Now, as there are only two priests here, the pastor and myself, it will not be hard for you to guess who 'Lin' is. My name has been changed by the Chinese government, and my official pass was written for 'Lin' as my family name, to which my superiors have added the surnames 'Sü' for Xavier and 'Syin' for Henry. I am now Lin Sü Syin to the government, Lin Shen Fu ('Holy Father Lin') to the Christians, and Lin Lan Ye ('His Excellency Lin') to the public at large.

"Peshang lies in the mountains. Ten miles distant is the 'Holy Mountain' the highest in China. It is a great deal like living in the Rocky Mountains. From my window I can see the blue peaks rising into the clouds, with creeks and little lakes everywhere around. It is very beautiful.

"The boxes of tea which I sent you are a present from a Chinese Father, whose family have a plantation adjoining that on which the tea for

the imperial household is grown (not strictly adjoining, for the Emperor's tea is grown on an island; but the next plantation to it). So, it is grown in a region noted for the excellence of its tea. I am told that the tea of this family is never exported, not even put on local markets, as it is bought up by the mandarins. We prepare the tea by putting a pinch of it in a cup and pouring scalding water over it, keeping it hot for a half hour. Then we drink it without milk or sugar."

Father Engbring concludes this letter with requests for American newspapers and with loving regards to relatives and brother priests at home.

CHAPTER IX

A GORY BATTLE-FIELD

When Father Engbring arrived in Henchowfu in the middle of November, 1888, there were in the vicariate of southern Hunan, besides the vicar apostolic who was absent at the time, only four foreign missionaries. Two of these were Tyrolese Franciscans, Father Ansgar Braun, vicar general, and Father Erhard Strobl. The other two were Father Engbring's American confrères, Fathers John Capistran Goette and Edmund Roediger.[1]

The vicar apostolic was Bishop Eusebius Semprini, O. F. M., a veteran missionary, sixty-five years old. His residence was not in the large city of Henchowfu, but in the neighboring town of Hoang-cha-wang. Born at Dungi, Italy, in 1823, and invested with the Franciscan habit in 1846, he had come to China as early as April, 1858. He was exercising the

1. *Acta Ordinis Fratrum Minorum*, Oct., 1888, p. 155.

office of vicar apostolic since 1876. In the letter which we shall quote more at length in the next chapter, Father Engbring writes of his bishop:

"Our present aged bishop was once taken prisoner, remaining so for some time until the Tientsin treaty was concluded. His first step on regaining his liberty was toward the erection of a church and school; but no sooner was the work finished than it was burned down by a mob. The matter was brought to court, with the result that the instigators of the riot had to rebuild the edifice at their own cost. Thereupon the generalissimo of the Chinese army, who resides in this city (Henchowfu), incited a mob to burn the mission again. But the plucky bishop, instead of retreating from the scene, forced the government to rebuild it once more, this time at the general's cost. This settled the matter with the practical-minded Chinese; from that day there has been peace in Henchowfu."

In 1892 Bishop Semprini resigned the post of vicar apostolic because of his advanced age; and in as far as possible he continued to labor as an ordinary missionary till his death three years later. He died at the age of seventy-two years

on January 8, 1895, the same year in which Father Engbring died.[2]

Besides the six foreign Franciscans, there were in the vicariate of southern Hunan at the end of 1888 ten native priests, two of whom were still studying theology at the seminary. During the year preceding October 27, 1888, the few missioners of southern Hunan baptized 203 adults and 148 infants of Catholic parents; besides, 3,467 infants of pagan parents received the sacrament of Baptism. The Catholics of the entire vicariate were scattered over 75 Christian communities and totaled 5,508 at this time; while the pagan population was estimated at 13,000,000.[3]

In all China there were in 1888, nine Franciscan bishops and 67 Franciscan missionaries, who were aided by about 80 native priests, most of them members of the Third Order Secular of St. Francis. Forty years later, in 1928, China had ten Franciscan vicariates and three prefectures apostolic with 365 Franciscan missioners and 171 native Tertiary priests. These statistics show plainly that Father Engbring and

2. *Ibid.*, XLV, 112; also XIV (1895), p. 83-84.
3. *Ibid.*, Mar. 1889, p. 40-41.

his fellow missioners were indeed pioneers in the field of southern Hunan.[4]

"The first knowledge of the Christian Faith." writes Father Leonard Lemmens, O. F. M.,[5] "came to Shensi and Hukwang, subsequently divided into Hupeh and Hunan, through educated Chinese, who, hailing from these provinces, had been converted to Christianity and baptized at Peking by the Jesuits"—therefore, some time after 1630. According to Father Gama, S. J., there were 1,000 Christians in Hukwang in 1663. In 1696 Father Basil Brollo, O. F. M., was made first vicar apostolic of Shensi and Shansi, and Father John Francis Nicolai, O. F. M., was appointed to the same position for Hukwang. But the very next year Father Nicolai journeyed to Rome and did not return. Hence the province of Hukwang was administered for a time by the vicar of Szechwan province. From 1762 to 1838 Hukwang was under the jurisdiction of the vicar of Shensi-

4. *Ibid.*, Oct., 1888, p. 156; and *Franciscans in China* Dec., 1928, p. 84. In October, 1930, the Franciscan missions in China included thirteen vicariates apostolic, a prefecture apostolic, two independent mission districts with a third being organized, and the leper mission of Tatsienlou, Szechwan—therefore, a total of eighteen mission fields.

5. *Die Franziskanermissionen der Gegenwart*, Chap. III, Section 4.

Shansi. It was during this period that Blessed John Lantrua of Triora, O. F. M., exercised his heroic ministry in these provinces. He suffered martyrdom at Changsha, the capital of Hunan, in 1816.[6]

In 1856 Hupeh and Hunan became separate vicariates; and in 1879 the Hunan vicariate was divided into the vicariates of South and North Hunan, the latter being entrusted to Spanish Augustinians. Since 1924 they are known respectively as the vicariates of Changsha and Changte. The headquarters, formerly near Henchowfu, were transferred to Changsha, the capital of the province. In 1921, Propaganda gave a section of the Changte vicariate in the northwestern part of Hunan to American Passionists; and in 1925 this section became the prefecture apostolic of Shenchow. In the same year a part of the Changsha vicariate was erected into the prefecture of Yungchow; and in 1930 it was given to the care of the Franciscan commissariat of Bulsano, Italy. In 1929, the northern section of the Yungchow prefecture, known as the Paoking district, was entrusted to

6. Cf. the writer's *A Missionary Jubilee* in *Franciscan Herald* (Chicago), XIII (1925), p. 158.

the care of the American Franciscan Province of the Holy Name (New York). A part of the territory comprising the vicariate of Changsha was separated from it in 1930, and made a new Franciscan vicariate, that of Henchow.

Father Engbring came to Hunan not only as a pioneer but also as a fearless soldier of the Cross. Hunan was not only a mission field untilled to a great extent; it was also very treacherous ground. While it held out great dangers, it gave promise of but little success to the missionaries who ventured into it. Only a few years before Father Engbring arrived in southern Hunan, one of the Tyrolese Franciscans in this mission was well-nigh beaten to death. Father Engbring relates the occurrence in the following words:

"Only four years ago a Tyrolese Father was beaten with clubs until he was senseless, and then thrown by the mob into the river, where he was left for dead. But the cold water revived the victim; and as he was a splendid swimmer, he gained the opposite bank, where, after dragging his bruised bones for a distance of three miles, he was met by some Christians and fetched, half-dead, to the bishop's residence."[7]

7. From the letter quoted in the next chapter.

As in Shansi, so also in Hunan, the Boxer Persecution of 1900 raged fiercely and wrought great havoc. Father Cesidius Perelli, O. F. M., was roasted alive in a fire which the fanatical insurgents had kindled in front of the missioner's residence. Bishop Semprini's successor in southern Hunan, Bishop Antonine Fantosati, O. F. M.,[8] and Father Joseph Gambaro, O. F. M., were seized as they landed in the harbor of Henchowfu and were cruelly tortured until they expired. Father Gambaro had his eyes put out; while the aged bishop was pierced with bamboo rods, suffering these tortures for three hours. Some years later the Emperor of China had a memorial of atonement erected on the spot where this outrage was perpetrated. As late as 1910 Father Autbert Groeteken, O. F. M., designated southern Hunan as "a stronghold of paganism and a hotbed of insurrections."[9]

Even today Hunan has a bad reputation. On April 24, 1929, three American Passionists, Fathers Walter Coveyou, Godfrey Holbein and

8. He was appointed April 5, 1892, and consecrated bishop on November 11, by Bishop Banci, O. F. M., of Northwest Hupeh.

9. *Die Missionsarbeit der Franziskaner in der Gegenwart*, p. 43-44.

Clement Seybold, lost their lives at Chenki in western Hunan at the hands of bandits.

In the letter which we shall quote presently, Father Engbring describes in detail the conditions prevailing in Hunan during his sojourn there.

CHAPTER X

TRAINING TROOPS IN HUNAN

Father Engbring did not remain long at Peshang, the Catholic village where he was to learn the Chinese language. A month after he had been sent to this village by the vicar general of South Hunan, his bishop, the Right Reverend Eusebius Semprini, O. F. M., returned from Rome. And immediately, January, 1889, he gave Father Engbring charge of the seminary of the vicariate at Tsaitung, about four miles distant from Henchowfu. After laboring in this seminary for several months, he wrote the following beautiful letter:

"Henchowfu, August 15, 1889.

"You have heard of my journey with its sometimes trying sometimes diverting incidents, and of my arrival here in the very middle of China, in the province of Hunan.

"On my arrival, I was sent by the vicar general to the small village of Peshang in the Nanling Mountains, to learn Chinese. But my bishop, the Right Reverend Eusebius Semprini, O. F. M., on returning from Rome a month later (January, 1889), gave me charge of the seminary of Tsaitung. When I offered some remonstrances, as not being able to speak Chinese, he indicated that such were the instructions he had received from the Propaganda in Rome and such had been the plan from the first. So he directed me to prepare and undertake the charge in a month.

"The last few months, therefore, I have been in the seminary, and though an 'apostolic missionary', I have been leading a life (and probably shall continue to do so for some years) much the same as when I taught theology in St. Louis.

"The seminary is situated some four miles from Henchowfu, a very large city in southern Hunan. The Nanling Mountains appear on two sides of the city, which, with the high turreted walls of the city, the fantastically shaped houses and the three large rivers that meet here, form a picture that for beauty does not find many equals. A Tyrolese Father, in spite of his

patriotism, confessed that it nearly approached his own beautiful country, and having gone to the Nanling Mountains, he was forced to admit that it even surpasses the Tyrol.

"Near the seminary, some three hundred feet distant, there is a large Buddhistic monastery, in which there were formerly as many as a thousand *bonzes* or monks, though now it contains only about thirty, and the larger part of the vast building is in ruins. It has a beautiful and very spacious garden, which our seminarians often use to take a walk or otherwise recreate, as we are on very good terms with the monks. Personally, as I can not speak Chinese, I have not visited them, and so I can give you no first-hand particulars about them.

"The seminary building belonged only recently to a rich Chinese merchant, who erected it at a great cost. Just two months after entering it, he and his family suddenly left and offered it for sale. Someone of the family seems not to have had full control of that delicate member which is the principal medium to express our thoughts, and so the secret of their precipitate removal leaked out. The *mokui* (evil spirits) had chosen the house for their dwelling! Naturally, no one now

dared to buy the haunted house, even when the owner came down to the paltry sum of two hundred and ten dollars.

"However, our bishop is not afraid of all the *mokui* in China, and as the large building could easily be adapted to seminary purposes, he determined to buy it. We are now living here happily and contented, to the great admiration of our pagan neighbors, who cannot comprehend our courage in braving the evil spirits.

"In the seminary there are two deacons, five additional students of theology, five students of philosophy and three teachers. As our students, the moment they enter the preparatory seminary (which is about twenty miles distant from here), are obliged to study Latin in a practical way by using it almost exclusively in their conversation, they are able on entering the major seminary to speak it fluently. So, in the matter of language, we have no difficulty. The young men are studious, some of them are very bright, and all like fun as much as any American student does. It is a pleasure to teach them; but as almost all the classes are given to me, it taxes my strength and takes up all my time. The consolation is that the continued mental strain leaves no time for

homesickness. I have been spared the latter annoyance so far, and live as happy as ever I did in America.

"As I told you previously, the Christians of this district are what we call 'old' Christians, that is, they belong to families which were converted some two hundred years ago by our own Franciscan Fathers and have remained steadfast despite bitter and bloody persecutions, notwithstanding the recurrent impossibility of seeing a priest for years at a time (once even for forty years!). Many of the families number martyrs among their members. Some of the Chinese priests even now with us have suffered imprisonment and consequent tortures. It is interesting and edifying to hear them tell of those terrible times, which transpired no earlier than twenty years ago and which may recur any day.

"According to international treaties, the Chinese government is obliged to protect the missionaries. Protestant ministers have taken advantage of these treaties, and since their conclusion one finds them also in the interior of China. I believe they are now in all the provinces (generally, however, near the rivers, so that in

times of danger they can escape), only Hunan excepted. So far they have ventured here only to distribute bibles and tracts from aboard their boats. The moment they show themselves on land, their lives are in danger. Just a few years ago one of them found his safety only by flying to our bishop's residence.

"Similar things, and even worse, have happened to the Catholics, though during the last century there were always priests in the province, secretly attending their duties when detection might cost them liberty or even life. . . .

"Wherever a mission is opened, the same seesawing procedure seems to take place: the church is burned down and rebuilt at a cost of those responsible for the arson. In such cases, naturally, the priest is almost always in danger for his life. A number of priests have been horribly maltreated. . . .

"Catholic churches are now found in most parts of Hunan, while there is not even the beginning of a Protestant foundation. However, there is no telling how long the favorable condition will last even with us, for there is bitter hatred against the 'foreign' Church, and the least incident may

influence the mob to destroy what years have built."

The day before he wrote the letter just quoted, Father Engbring penned another, written in German, to his provincial superior in America. In this letter he describes his new work more in detail; and we shall quote it in full.

"Henchowfu, Hunan, August 14, 1889.

"A few days ago I received a letter from Father Gerard (San Francisco) in which he says that he has not received the first letter to which I referred. Yesterday, in a letter from Father Florence (Chaska, Minn.), I read: 'Father Provincial says he has not received a letter from you as yet.' I must infer, therefore, that the letters which I wrote to you and to Father Gerard immediately after my arrival in Hunan have disappeared in some way and have been lost. I more than regret this, since it appears that I have failed toward my religious superior in ordinary politeness as well as in respect; and I regret it all the more since I am especially indebted to you because of the love and solicitude which you showed to me in Indianapolis while I was there as a young priest for a vacation granted to me on account of an ailment of the lungs.

"From Father Florence you have surely heard that I arrived safe in Hunan. After I had taught for two months in the seminary (at Tsaitung), the former rector and vicar general, Father Ansgar Braun, was transferred to another province, and the bishop appointed me rector. With the exception of two months (in Peshang), therefore, I have spent the whole year in the same occupation and almost in the same manner of life as during the past years in Quincy and St. Louis; and thus things will probably go on for the next few years.

"Although I cannot speak Chinese yet, I find no difficulty in associating with the students since all of them speak Latin fluently. From the moment they enter college (the preparatory seminary), they are urged to use Latin in conversation. The result is that when after eight or nine years they enter the seminary, they can speak Latin almost as easily and fluently as their own mother tongue. In the seminary there are at present two deacons, six other theologians and five philosophers, besides the three teachers; namely, a venerable old Chinese priest who made his studies in Rome, a Chinese professor who lectures on Confucius, and myself. The work

which consequently falls to my share is too great to allow me any time or opportunity for exercising the sacred ministry or for doing any mission work. What progress is being made, therefore, in the propagation of our holy religion, I know only from hearsay.

"But that which has often been doubted in America and Europe, I have seen with my own eyes. I mean infanticide, that is, the murdering of baby girls; for boys are never killed. It is common practice in this locality. Every pond—and every family has one—is witness of this custom. In the little village where I stayed for a while, two hundred and seventy-nine new born girls were brought to the orphanage in the past year. So much human feeling the mothers still retain that they prefer to bring their children to us where we have orphanages. If we cannot accept the waifs—which is often the case on account of the lack of means—or if there is no orphanage in the neighborhood, the nearest pond becomes their grave. It seems to be the rule that only such girls are allowed to live whose engagement has been secured before their birth. The father of the prospective bridegroom then

defrays the expenses of the future bride's education.

"On the other hand Father Edmund told me that in his district, about a hundred miles south of here, infanticide occurs only rarely. The reason, he said, was that there the women had 'large feet'. Their feet are not stunted and deformed as here. Consequently they are able to work and are not a burden but a help to their parents. As here in Hunan, so it is probably elsewhere in China: in one district this abominable custom prevails, in another not. And that is probably also the reason why honest and well-meaning writers hold opposing views, one asserting what the other denies emphatically.

"My present main care is the learning of the Chinese language which is causing me endless difficulties. The greatest hindrance is due to the fact that I must be satisfied with the notes of former missionaries and get along without the aid of a good grammar. I have a small grammar, indeed; but it is intended for the written and not for the spoken or conversational language, and hence it is useless for the next few years. Some time ago I saw in *Die Katholischen Missionen* an advertisement for a Chinese grammar. May I

ask you, Reverend Father, to procure one for me. The expenses, of course, I could defray only by reading holy Masses. I know of no one in all Europe whom I could approach with such a request. It would be a greater help, a greater favor for me than I can tell in these few lines. Still I do not want to be importunate; and, therefore, if to fulfill this request you should be put to inconveniences, I would ask you to pay no heed to it.

"By gaining a thorough knowledge of the Chinese language I hope to exercise an altogether different influence on the seminarians than now, and thus also win souls for God and honor for the Province of the Sacred Heart. Till now I have remained in good health, although Hunan has not too good a reputation in this respect, and as yet I have had no homesickness. With everything else I am satisfied, and I have found things here much better than I expected."

CHAPTER XI

A SICK CALL IN THE MOUNTAINS

One of the teachers at the seminary of Tsaitung when Father Engbring arrived there was Father John Capistran Goette. He had been teaching theology and serving as chaplain of the nearby orphanage. Soon, however, Father John Capistran was transferred to the vicariate of northern Shensi, where he arrived in May, 1890. The other American missionary in southern Hunan, Father Edmund Roediger, was at this time doing missionary work in a large district, half the area of Missouri,—the same which was later made the prefecture of Yungchow and from which the American Franciscan mission of Paoking has been formed. Father Edmund refers to Paokingfu as Paotsinfu. His central mission was at Fukiatsong. During the eight years that he labored in this vast mission field, he usually had a Chinese priest for an assistant.

In an autobiographical sketch,[1] which he wrote shortly before his death (December 31, 1926), Father Edmund speaks of his work in this mission field as follows:

"My journeys usually lasted about two months, or until such time as my stomach grew lopsided and I was forced to return to the center. Then my assistant had to sally forth. There was also at Fukiatsong an orphanage belonging to the Holy Childhood, directed by native virgins, as they are called, that is young women who choose to remain single and consecrate their lives to the Church. The principal feasts of the Church, such as Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, Assumption and Portiuncola, were generally celebrated at home, and there would always be a few hundred visitors on those occasions. The mission had in my day about 700 Christians. It developed upon the misionary to adjust all lawsuits concerning them, at the court of the mandarin. Most of them saw their priest only once or twice a year and then only for two or three days. They were good Christians. The number of Communions numbered about 1,500 a year, which means that the

1. *Franciscan Herald*, XV, 296-298.

good people made the best use of the few days that were spent with them annually. I had charge of this mission for eight years, sometimes all alone and then again assisted by a Chinese priest. The mission is now (1926) in charge of Tyrolese Franciscans, who have nine European priests and a lay brother in the field, with more than 7,000 Christians."

Father Edmund was in poor health during all the years that he spent in this extensive mission field. In the beginning of 1890 he grew very sick with typhoid fever, which brought him to the very door of death. Father Engbring had just commenced his second year as teacher at the seminary of Tsaitung. Father John Capistran had left for Shensi. And so Father Engbring hurried to his sick confrère in order to give him the last sacraments. Two months after this sick call and the trip he undertook to answer it, he wrote the following letter:

"Henchowfu, April 2, 1890.

"A little over two months ago I received notice to hurry some two hundred miles south of here to give the last sacraments to Father Edmund Roediger, O. F. M., who lives all alone in the

Nanling Mountains and was very low with typhoid fever. The way by river would have taken over ten days while the overland route, afoot, could be made in five days. As there was no time to lose, I took the latter route.

"It was the first time that I had to make use of Chinese inns. It would only disgust you if I described them; but if you wish to have an idea, go to the worst looking hovel in Chinatown in San Francisco, and imagine yourself remaining there over night in one and the same room with ten or fifteen Chinese! But apart from the anxiety for my confrère, the day time offered its compensations in the beautiful Nanling Mountains —sights of such romantic beauty as I had never beheld before.

"The return was by way of the river and required ten days. According to the weather, the river junks are either propelled by sails or towed like canal boats, or again, if there is a very contrary wind, or rain, they are just brought along shore, where they remain for a day or two or even five, until the weather is toward. Imagine what it means to be cooped up in a tiny cabin for the time, in a room so narrow and low that it is impossible to stand up, the little extra space

Father Edmund Roediger, O. F. M., the fellow missionary to whom Father Engbring administered the last sacraments in the Nanling mountains.

being occupied by four or six sailors gambling, quarreling and smoking opium. The odor of burning opium, especially the lower grade stuff, is something horrible.

"This mode of traveling is enough to drive a civilized person wild; yet nothing remains but to bear it as patiently as possible, unless you care to hear sailors wondering 'what is the matter with that crazy foreign devil'."

Father Edmund recuperated from the sickness which occasioned Father Engbring's first long missionary trip. In 1895, however, ill health forced Father Edmund to return to the States. There his condition improved again; and he outlived his good confrère who had once prepared him for death, by thirty-one years.

Father Edmund Roediger, like Father Engbring, deserves the name of a pioneer missionary. He was born six days after Bishop Athanasius Goette, on April 17, 1857, at Kallmerode, Province of Saxony, Germany; and he was a fellow novice of the two Goette brothers, Fratres Athanasius and John Capistran, at Warendorf. With them he came to America and joined the Franciscan Province of the Sacred Heart. Accompanied by Father John Capistran Goette, he went to

southern Hunan, China, in 1884. Till the summer of 1886 he was professor at the seminary and chaplain of the Holy Childhood orphanage near Henchowfu. At that time the latter institution was in charge of twenty-two Chinese sisters of the Canossian community and harbored some three hundred children. Then for eight years (1886-1894) he was traveling missionary of Yungchowfu and Paokingfu. After he recovered from the attack of typhoid fever which brought Father Engbring to his side, he continued his missionary labors in that district.

Three years later, however, he was again brought to the brink of the grave by an acute attack of dysentery. We shall let Father Edmund himself tell us of the turn of events:

"In the year 1893 a fearful epidemic broke out in my territory, coming from the south—the dysentery. The people died by thousands. An excellent physician, a Chinese, concerned himself very specially about me and got me safely through the disease, to the astonishment of our vicar general, who held the degree of Doctor of Medicine from the University of Louvain. The latter declared: 'Father, it is a miracle—your recovery!'

"Our new bishop, the late Bishop Antonine Fantosati (martyred in 1900, and now in process of beatification), allowed me a little vacation at Hankow, from which I returned to try my strength in a new mission field, that of Tongkiang.[2] But my health was gone. I remained there only nine months. Our vicar general had meanwhile gotten in touch with what was considered the best specialist in the world on dysentery, asking him what could be done for me The reply was: 'Father Edmund is incurable!' "

And so he was forced to return to the States. On his homeward journey he paid a last visit to his confrère, Father Engbring, who was then procurator apostolic at Hankow. This was the occasion when Father Engbring related to Father Edmund how he was instrumental in saving the city of Wuchang from bombardment and destruction by fire, as narrated in the first chapter. It is to Father Edmund that we owe many of the interesting facts from the life of Father Engbring, recounted in these pages.

Father Edmund was back in San Francisco on

2. Tongkiang was in the neighborhood of the episcopal residence; at one time it had, in fact, been the central mission at which the bishop resided.

May 6, 1895. In this country he recovered from his ailment; and for many years he was engaged in parish work as also in preaching and giving retreats. In 1924 he celebrated his golden jubilee as a Franciscan. He died at Washington, Missouri, on the last day of the year 1926. On one occasion Father Edmund told the writer that, after he had recuperated in the United States, he made arrangements to go back to China; but his plans did not materialize. He also revealed to the writer that at one time while he was back in the States the position of vicar apostolic and bishop in China was offered to him. Altogether Father Edmund had served the Chinese missions a little over ten years; including the journey to and from China, it was a few days over eleven years.

CHAPTER XII

A SUMMONS FROM THE GENERAL

While Father Engbring was visiting his sick confrère, Father Edmund, a persecution against the Christians broke out in the vicinity of Henchowfu. It was still in progress when he returned, continuing for about two months.

Constant danger to life and limb, as well as the hardships of a long and arduous journey, took its toll on Father Engbring's health; and he was taken sick with fever and rheumatism. Hardly had he recovered, when a summons from Rome reached him, bidding him to repair to Hankow. After he arrived there, he sent to his Father Provincial in the States, the Very Reverend Ferdinand Bergmeier, the following letter, written in German:

"Hankow, Hupeh, September 4, 1890.

"I hope you have not become displeased with me because of my long silence. I had begun to

write on several different occasions, but each time I was interrupted or hindered in mailing the letter. When your kind letter arrived I was away on a journey to Father Edmund who lay very sick abed; and I had to remain with him for a considerable time, while my mail was waiting for me in the episcopal residence.

"When I returned to the seminary I found that meanwhile a persecution against the Christians and the Church had broken out. For almost two months we were in daily, yes hourly, danger of being cut to pieces. If the leader of the insurrection had not died at the critical moment, no foreigner or priest in Hunan would have survived.

"In consequence of the excitement and the hardships of a journey in winter over the mountains, I contracted a fever and rheumatism, confining me to bed and rendering me helpless for a long time.

"Then of a sudden came the command from Rome that I betake myself to Hankow to confer with the bishop there regarding a central seminary. As you perhaps read in *Acta Minorum*, the four bishops of Hupeh and Hunan

have formed the plan of founding a general seminary in Hupeh for their several vicariates. It seems that now the bishop of Hunan is encountering some difficulties; and so Bishop Carlassare of Hankow asked permission for me to come to Hankow, so I could answer frankly and objectively the questions laid before me by Rome regarding the seminary and bishop of Hunan and the personnel of this vicariate. I, therefore, had to make the journey of fifteen days to Hankow in a small boat, eight feet wide and five feet high,—and that during the hot season of the year, when the temperature on the boat was 110 and more degrees Fahrenheit every day from 8 A. M. to 4 P. M. The result was that I arrived in Hankow more dead than alive. It was impossible for me, therefore, to write earlier; and even now I can write only a little. And I hope, dear Father Provincial, that you will pardon my long silence and apparent neglect.

"The Mass intentions together with the draft, I have received. A hearty 'Thank you!', and may God reward you! As you perhaps know, we can live here on twenty to thirty cents a day; and what remains of the stipends is put into the treasury of the vicariate. . . . We must help

ourselves as best we can. I hope, therefore, dear Father Provincial, and I ask you very earnestly to continue to help us by sending Mass intentions you have left over or other alms. It is a direct cooperation in the work of saving the souls of innocent little children, of propagating our holy Faith; it is a great help for the missions of our own Franciscan order. Besides, I can assure you, that with the exception of Hunan, the Franciscan missions of China are model missions and are recognized as such by Protestants and other religious orders.

"Bishop Carlassare asked the Most Reverend Father Minister General to retain me as a teacher in his seminary. A few days ago the obedience has arrived; and so I belong now to the vicariate of eastern Hupeh. The first three months I will spend in the interior of the province, both on account of my health which has suffered of late, and also to learn the patois of Hupeh. After the feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, I am to take up my work in the seminary as teacher.

"Because I am indisposed, it is not possible for me now, but I hope later, to communicate to you

many other things which would perhaps be of interest to you."[1]

After Father Engbring, now a missionary of eastern Hupeh, had spent some three months in the interior of the province, he took up his duties as teacher in the seminary at Wuchang, the capital of Hupeh and the headquarters of the vicariate of eastern Hupeh. Here, too, he was appointed rector of the institution. The persecution through which Father Engbring had passed unscathed in Hunan during the first part of 1890, was only the beginning of a period of great unrest throughout central China, continuing during 1891 and 1892. It was a time of great hardships for the missions in these parts. As narrated in the first chapter, Father Engbring saved the city of Wuchang from destruction by fire, while he was the rector of the seminary in that city.

Just how Father Engbring fared otherwise during this period we are unable to tell, since we

1. The letters of Father Engbring to his provincial superiors in America are kept in the archives of the Chicago province in St. Anthony's Friary, St. Louis; while those which he wrote to his kinsfolk have been printed in *Franciscan Herald*, Vol. XV (1927). The latter appeared under the caption "Off to China Forty Years Ago" and "In China Forty Years Ago," having been edited by Fr. James Meyer, O. F. M.

have no letters written by him between September, 1890, and September 1892. Already in his letter of April 2, 1890, which recounts his visit to Father Edmund's bedside, Father Engbring complains in the conclusion that some of his mail failed to reach its destination. The same was true of mail sent to Father Engbring from the States. And this probably continued to occur during the years 1891 and 1892.

Most of all Father Engbring regretted that the letters and parcels to and from the folks at home miscarried. Among these there was a letter of Father Engbring which should have reached his father on his deathbed, and also the letter and papers which were to notify the missionary of his father's death. As it was, Father Engbring learned of his father's demise only a long time after it occurred.

Father Engbring had been rector of the seminary at Tsaitung, Hunan, for about two years (1889-1890). The seminary of Wuchang, Hupeh, he directed likewise for some two years (1891-1892). Then he was chosen for the difficult work of a missionary dean; and this post he held also for about two years. The vicariate of eastern Hupeh was at this time divided into four

large deaneries. The largest of these, that of Tenganfu in northeastern Hupeh, was entrusted to the guidance and leadership of Father Engbring toward the end of 1892.

Before leaving Wuchang to take up his new duties, Father Engbring wrote the following letter to his dear ones at home:

"Wuchang, Hupeh, September 1, 1892.

"I have been in the seminary until now. Today I am leaving for northern Hupeh, where I am to remain for some six months, and perhaps for some years, since a number of the older missionaries have died, and I, being the eldest among the more recent arrivals who are at the disposal of the authorities, have been singled out to take charge there. So, I am no longer the rector of a seminary but a dean, with charge over the priests of some eight counties. My voyage in a little Chinese boat, up to the new district will take about six days.

"Postal communication from there to Hankow, our clearing station, will not be so good. But do not worry and do not let mother fret, if you should not have word from me for some time. If I should happen to fall seriously ill, or to die, you

will receive due notice from my bishop. Not hearing from me will be the surest sign that all is well."

Shortly after arriving in his new field of labor, Father Engbring wrote the following letter to Very Reverend Michael Richardt, his Provincial in the United States:

"Ko-kia-san, November 15, 1892.

"It is rather late that I write to you. But besides Chinese riots, which threatened us in this district until the last months, I am, with the exception of summer, almost always subject to rheumatism.

"Until last month I was rector of the seminary in the capital city of Wuchang, but the removal lately of some older missionaries by death or transfer to other provinces, has compelled the bishop to send me as dean to the northern part of Hupeh. This part has had an exceptionally bad year, and the people for sheer misery rose in revolt, which after a month was repressed. The misery, however, remains.

"Dear Father Provincial, may I ask you to aid me and the five priests subject to my care by

sending such Mass intentions as the province cannot fulfill, or other alms, no matter how small?

"Regarding myself, as the state of my health is, I do not expect to see home again or the Fathers of our province, of whom so many are dear by ties of both friendship and of long fellowship in study."

CHAPTER XIII

CHAMPION OF THE CROSS IN HUPEH

The hardest years in the missionary career of Father Engbring were no doubt the two he spent as traveling missioner and dean in Hupeh. After laboring for about a half year as dean of the Tenganfu district in northeastern Hupeh, Father Engbring wrote the following letter to his Father Provincial in the States.

From it we learn how great were the hardships Father Engbring had to undergo and with what courage the weakening and ailing pioneer missioner bore up under them.

"Tenganfu, Hupeh, May 18, 1893.

"I just received your kind letter, and as the courier will leave tomorrow for Hankow I must answer immediately or wait two months for the next occasion. China has no official post; only merchants have some lines which always follow the large cities. I am some two hundred li (three

li to one mile) out of the way; hence every two months a courier is sent to me and the other Fathers of this northern district. It sometimes happens that letters etc. from home arrive at Hankow some days after the courier has left. The letters etc. must then lay over in Hankow two months. The courier arriving in my district, it may happen, that I am called off for a sick call or a lawsuit some two to three hundred li. The courier will leave the post and start for the next Father. It can thus happen that a delay of four months intervene before I can answer. The consequence of this is that between Fathers Capistran, Edmund and myself there is hardly any communication. In fact we are as much separated from one another, as we are from the Fathers in America.

"If 'tabula capituli' (lists of the Fathers and Brothers in the various friaries of the province, drawn up at the provincial chapters) etc. are sent, it would be well to send them directly to the address of each one. If forwarded to me, the other Fathers would perhaps receive it a year after it was sent from America.

"Very Reverend and dear Father, I cannot tell how glad I was to receive a letter from you.

For a whole year we live entirely among Chinese; only once a year we can go down to Hankow for retreat and meet other Fathers, that is, European Fathers. Any letter or news or newspaper from home is welcome, how much more a letter from old friends and teachers.

"May God bless you and the few others who have not forgotten me. The Mass stipends were and are for me a real alms, besides a direct assistance in the propagation of the Faith. I cannot explain, as I have no time just now; and Father Athanasius also cannot, as he comes from a northern province.[1] In China circumstances vary not only in every province but also in every district and county.

"Our bishopric is divided into four deaneries. I am appointed dean of the largest and most distant from Hankow, with six priests under my care. Only the dean can carry on a lawsuit; and as every Father has two to three of them every year, the burden of all these falls on me. I must go to the place in question, sometimes five hundred li by roads that are generally one and a

1. About this time Father Athanasius returned to the States and remained for some years to regain his health. Cf. Chapter VII.

half feet wide, at the highest three feet, on foot or by wheelbarrow or on horseback, as best I can. I have walked one hundred li in one day (thirty-five miles)—a thing that in America in my wildest dreams I could not have imagined. But here one gets accustomed to walking.

"The matter must then be examined, which on account of the excessive verbosity and universal mendacity of the Chinese is to the utmost trying to foreigners. The worst comes then when the lawsuit is brought to the mandarin. European diplomats when matched with Chinese diplomats have so far come off invariably second best; and as to myself, I am no match to the wiliness and deceits of the Chinese officials. Only among the Christians there are here some who are just as adept in these arts as the officials themselves. It is then diamond cut diamond. It is sometimes a matter of life and death, poverty or utter ruin for the poor Christians, unjustly accused; and I cannot describe the anxiety, the stress on mind and body that is the consequence.

"These petty persecutions go on for two to three years everywhere where there are new converts. Then matters settle down, and everything for the future in that part or place

goes on as if nothing had occurred. Hence Fathers engaged in the care of 'old' Christians lead a life as quiet and placid as any rural pastor in the States, while the others are living in a perpetual tempest. After some years, then, the nerves give away or the mind, as it has often happened in China to European Fathers.

"I have received from time to time, about twice a year, Mass intentions from Father Athanasius, also wine; but it was never mentioned from whom sent. If I may do so, I would request you to send alms directly to me. As I am so far north, out of the way (no river etc.), I could not have the wine sent up, and it became the property of the procurator. If it meets your approval, please send me the English Catholic newspaper of St. Louis. The 'English', as the Father Procurator in Hankow gives the paper to the patients in the hospital there, who all understand English, to read, and then sends it up to me. I had one the first years from some unknown friend, but it stopped—and stopped just when ecclesiastical matters in the United States began to be interesting.

"When in February I went down to Hankow (by the way I would state that it takes ten days

to do so) for retreat, I read through the *Osservatore Cattolico* and *Civilta Cattolica* (Rome). . .

" 'Missionaries need not be learned, but pious and virtuous' (St. Francis Xavier). True, for the rest of the world except China. In Chinese, that is, the language and literature, a European can never compete with a Chinese priest. As to Latin there is not one of them as also of the theologians who does not speak it fluently. If the foreign missionary cannot show that he is superior in something else, he will be looked down upon and practically of not much use. The Chinese are led by authority, not so much by reason. They will soon learn from the native priests how the Father is; and the 'good and pious Father's' life will be sufficiently miserable and not over useful. At table, in our intercourse with one another, we use only Latin. During the four years I was in the seminary, I heard and spoke only Latin. It is in this way that Latin becomes as natural as one's mother tongue.

"Please recommend me to the prayers of the community without mentioning name. What I fear is that in a few years I will be a useless wreck. I am breaking down; and as the older

missionaries, Hollanders, have left our vicariate for a newly erected vicariate to be directed by the Fathers of Holland, and the other Fathers, Italians, are all (except four) newcomers, there is no probability or possibility of change or help. I will have to stand on my post as long and as best I can. If I stand it for three or four years, —with the new missionaries and the many Chinese priests we have now or will soon be ordained, labor will be divided and rest for some months possible. God will provide. At holy Mass, please, make a memento for me! . . .

"If not inconvenient, may I request you to send some fifty Mass stipends, or as many as you can spare, immediately. From the bishop who is himself in need, I receive assistance only when in great need. I can live until October, and then I know not what to do. By October an answer could arrive here, and I will say a special Mass for your intention."

In his letters to his kinsfolk, however, Father Engbring tries to conceal his many hardships and declining health. In the following letter to his dear ones, written shortly after the one just quoted, he barely mentions the fact that he was suffering from rheumatism.

"Tenganfu, Hupeh, June 5, 1893.

"As to myself, I am so far quite well. Only the rheumatism bothers me occasionally, affecting especially arm and shoulder.

"As you know, I am engaged in northeastern Hupeh, a few hundred miles from any postal connection. Hence I receive letters only very seldom, and the facilities for sending letters on my part are even more restricted.

"The missionaries in this vicariate usually have charge of ten or fifteen Christian communities, making the round of them perhaps once a year, on which occasion they remain from three weeks to a month in each community. During his stay in each village the missionary usually has the three first and last days for himself and his preparations; the remainder of the time he spends in daily preaching, teaching catechism, instructing converts, baptizing, hearing confessions, and the like, while the Christians of the place provide for his temporal needs during the time. The time over, the Christians of the next community send a convoy to carry the missionary with all his earthly goods, which are not over many, to their midst; and thus it goes on from year to year.

"My life in general is as I have just described,

except that, being dean with charge of all the priests of the district, I have fewer communities to visit than the other missionaries, in order to leave me more time for the adjustment of lawsuits, quarrels and petty annoyances which are constantly thrown in our way by the pagan population. Europeans I see very seldom—perhaps once or twice a year; also my brother priests in this district are Chinese."

Towards the end of the year (1893), Father Engbring was transferred from the deanery of Tenganfu to that of Nganlou. The reason why the bishop placed Father Engbring in charge of the Nganlou deanery lay in the fact that some Christians there had become involved in a lawsuit which well-nigh caused a persecution of all the Christians in these parts. For four months the lawsuit dragged on, making great demands on Father Engbring. But finally he succeeded in bringing it to a happy close. This is "the great persecution of the Christians in East Hupeh" which Father Edmund Roediger says was averted by Father Engbring.

Writing to a brother priest, Father Edmund says:

"I am sending you two photographs of the

mission compound of Wuchang. It was here that Father Engbring displayed his chief activity. He was professor of the seminary there. There, too, by reason of his friendly relations with the commanders and officers of the warships, he saved the city of Wuchang some years ago from reprisals on the part of the Europeans. In East Hupeh his overtures forestalled a great persecution of the Christians. These are established facts in central China."

Father Engbring himself tells us about this affair at the end of the following letter to his Father Provincial, which he wrote while returning to his missions from Hankow where he made his annual retreat.

"Hankow, March 29, 1894.

"I received your kind letter, also two hundred dollars for four hundred Masses from Father Clementin, to whom also I have sent a receipt.

"Your letter has given me a great deal of mental trouble. If I am not to receive any alms from America, that is, from the province, I will simply be at my wits' ends to make a living. You will remember that for some years I was rector of the seminary. At that time there were

three students who after having completed fully their course of studies had to remain in the seminary for eight long years more, (making themselves as useful as they could), without the bishop being able to ordain them for want of money to support them as priests. As at that time I continually received Mass intentions at one dollar each from America, I went to the bishop and offered to supply to the oldest of them for a number of years one hundred Mass intentions, upon which promise the bishop ordained him. I have kept my promise, although as dean and living always among catechumens and new Christians my expenses came every year to about three hundred dollars. Last year, as I received from Father Athanasius Mass intentions at only fifty cents each and now four hundred more at this same amount, it was only by personal privation and by the help of several Catholic officers of the German, English, Austrian and American men-of-war ships that are in Hankow and whom I visit (at the time of our spiritual exercises) as a sort of deputy parish priest, that I got barely through.

"I gave your letter to Msgr. Carlassare, our bishop, to read; and he said that we three

missionaries (from the Sacred Heart Province) did not fall under the prohibition of sending Mass intentions out of the province, since we were according to a decision of the Curia (the headquarters of the order in Rome) to be regarded in the province. . . .

"The Fathers of the Belgian, Holland, Tyrolian provinces receive their help from the Third Order. Please, Very Reverend Father remember me, (or rather our Franciscan missions in China,) in the conferences to the members of the Third Order. I do not think they would be more backward than those of Europe.

"I am writing this on a little boat and in a short time I will arrive at my Christian community, whence I cannot write any more. Let me again thank you and other Fathers of the province who helping me materially, have helped me also spiritually more than I can express. Our Hupeh mission differs entirely from that of Hunan (Father Edmund's) and that of Shensi (Father Capistran's). It is not only the poorest province (and what that means in China is impossible to express) but contains a population more inimical than any other. All the outrages, murders, etc. have occurred here. . . .

"In my district where there are seven to ten millions, there is every year either in the lowlands or in the mountainous district a famine. There are two counties, Tien-men and Kien-kiang, that lie below the level of the great river; and if it rains but a little the whole is swamped with no outlet for the water. If it does not rain, the other three counties lying higher can hardly collect anything for drought. This is every year—and as it is common, nobody makes any mention. Hence Hupeh inhabitants are called by other provinces 'Hupehtih-kao-fa-tsii'—'Hupeh beggars'. Receiving an alms, then, is a godsend for me personally, living eleven months a year in the misery and squalor of Chinese farm houses, a godsend for the Mission (a Franciscan one), a godsend for the poor people, a godsend for the poor exposed female babies who are rejected by their cruel parents.

"I have been changed from the deanery of Tengan to that of Nganlou with about six Chinese priests in the different counties of this district. The bishop has changed me, as a criminal lawsuit against Christians has broken out here which in gravity and possible consequences is such, as the bishop told me, that

as long as he has been in China (some thirty years) he has never had the kind. He wanted me to take up the case, as he says I had the most 'freddo sangue'. I can only indicate it. Some foolish and overproud native Christians had falsified the seal of the mandarin and with its aid had imposed on pagans, claiming rights not belonging to them etc. etc. etc. The matter has come out, but there are no strict proofs; and whatever they are, they are in my hands. If I show them, or if the mandarin can wheedle them out, or draw from me any admission, the consequence would be death by strangulation for three families (Christian), very likely a popular outbreak, an informal persecution, aided and abetted secretly by the officials, condemned *publicly* by the high officials in Pekin though *interiorly* rejoicing at it. The case has gone on now for four months; and now I hope it is drawing to conclusion, and a happy one too. But what a life, those months! From want of sleep I am getting as nervous as a baby. Yet O. A. M. D. G. (All for the greater glory of God)!

"Please remember me, Very Reverend Father, in your prayers and have me remembered by the community under the title of 'one who needs it'."

Writing to his loved ones two months later, Father Engbring again changes the tone of his letter, and tries to address them in a cheerful and optimistic strain, lest he might cause them to worry about him. Reading between the lines, however, we can easily picture to ourselves the hardships and privations which this zealous missionary had to endure as dean in these parts. The letter reads as follows:

"May 26, 1894.

"As you will have heard, especially from Very Reverend Father Provincial, Michael Richardt, I am getting on fairly well in China. Work, worry and privations, there are plenty—also, now and then, danger for life and limb, but the thought that it is all for our dear Savior and Holy Mother Church consoles one and makes everything, if not easy, at least bearable. Besides, there are among our Chinese Christians such lovable, good people that you could not find them better in America, and they are a source of joy and comfort to the missionary. And so, dear mother, even if I do not write often, do not worry about me. I am where holy obedience has sent me, and so I am ever in God's hand.

"My work, combined with the absence of postal facilities, accounts for the irregularity of my correspondence. You see there is constant annoyance and friction between the pagans and our neophytes, because the former seek to force the Christians to contribute toward their idolatrous worship, and to support other superstitious practices. The dean is the competent authority before the law to take up these matters with the Chinese magistrates, and so I am almost always on the road from one county to another.

"Another reason for it is that every letter costs me ten cents, and as I get only twenty cents a day, I am really too poor to do very much corresponding. In America one often imagines that a Chinese missionary is well supplied with all that he could wish, like the clergy there. If the missionary has several parishes of 'old' Christians, that is, such whose forefathers were Christians already, his flock supports him and he is comparatively well placed, though he receives nothing from his bishop. But where he has charge of 'new' Christians, he receives fifty ounces of silver from his bishop, with what Mass stipends are offered him. As I have to travel a great deal, I must often omit holy Mass, and

so I do not have many Mass stipends. Owing to such straitened circumstances, I have not fared very well for the past year, and what will be my lot in the coming year, must rest with Almighty God.

"But now, do not think for a minute that I am famishing. In this part of China, everything is amazingly cheap. One can live well enough on ten cents a day and for twenty cents you can have meat and vegetables and fruit of all kinds. A working man may get his twelve cents a day and keep himself and family on it.[2]

"In my district we have several hundred new converts every year, and our holy Faith is spreading more and more, though compared with the immense population of four hundred millions, progress is slow enough."

2. It must be borne in mind, of course, that these words were written in 1894.

CHAPTER XIV

FAITHFUL TO THE END

Father Engbring's letter of May 26, 1894, was his last. Not long after writing it, he was called to Hankow and made procurator apostolic for twenty-one vicariates in China. This position had just become vacant by the death of Father Angelo da Vandagua, O. F. M. It was a very difficult post at the time, since a war between China and Japan had just commenced. Father Edmund Roediger calls this appointment "the work of Divine Providence". He writes of Father Engbring:

"One could not have found a better man for this post at that time. He acted as procurator for twenty-one bishops and their missionaries, north, west and south, as procurator of all mission articles, general postmaster, representative banker not only of the bishops and their

missionaries but also of large merchant companies in Europe, because that work could not well have been done in any other way on account of the war. Amid all this work he was suffering from a severe illness of the kidneys, which soon helped to bring on his death."

Father Engbring did not hold the position of procurator long. As if he had a presentiment, he wrote in his last letter: "What will be my lot in the coming year, must rest with God." After a brief illness, his splendid, if short, missionary career came to an abrupt close on July 31, 1895.

Bishop Carlassare notified Father Athanasius Goette of his confrère's death by means of the following letter, written in Latin:

"Outchang (Wuchang), August 3, 1895.

"I have news most sad to communicate to your province. Father Engbring has suddenly departed from this life. His death occurred on July 31, about the third hour after midnight. He was able to have Absolution and Extreme Unction. I ask you, Reverend Father, to please communicate

this news to the superiors of the province and to the family of the deceased. I would have done this myself, if I had the necessary addresses on hand. Meanwhile I thank you, Reverend Father, and remain,

"Most devotedly yours

"✠ Fr. Vincena Epiphanius (Carlassare),

"Vicar Apostolic of East Hupeh."

The sad news of Father Engbring's death was sent to his mother by Father Edmund Roediger, who had been forced by ill health to leave China in the preceding April. Father Roediger's letter reads as follows:

"San Francisco, California,
"September 1, 1895.

"Dear Mrs. Engbring:

"The offices of charity toward my friend of many years and brother in religion, Father Xavier Engbring, make it my duty to give you sad news of your reverend son. God is admirable in His dispensations and inscrutable in His ways. The just He rewards in abundance with the good

things of Heaven, while the wicked go empty-handed. Let us humbly submit to His holy will.

"When I took leave of Father Xavier at Hankow on April 1 of this year, our farewells were very sad indeed. He accompanied me to my steamer and begged me earnestly to pay you an early visit. As we parted, he said significantly that he hoped to meet me again in Heaven.

"A few short weeks after arriving in San Francisco, I had a letter from him saying that he could not bear up much longer, that he was breaking down with all the work. Now, last evening, I had another letter, not from him but from a fellow missionary. It contained the news that on July 31, at three in the morning, Father Xavier fell asleep in the Lord, after a brief illness brought on by excessive heat. God has taken his soul to Himself, to our true home, where all earthly suffering is glorified with the everlasting crown.

"Be comforted! Your reverend son truly died the death of the just. He fought a good fight as a brave soldier of Christ and died a hero in the trying battle for the conversion of China. His latest position was that of apostolic procurator at Hankow, a large center for our Chinese

missions, where he was in charge of all the money, mail and other secular business of twenty-one vicariates.

"The difficulties and trials of a missionary in China can be appreciated only by one who has labored and suffered for years in the field. Having spent eleven years in the heart of China myself, I know from experience what a martyrdom it is to labor there for the propagation of the Faith unassisted by the comforts of civilization. Now it has pleased God to give your reverend son the eternal crown for this martyrdom. May he dwell in eternal peace. At my departure from Hankow, Father Xavier gave me a few keepsakes for you. I have sent them on, and hope that you have received them.

"Again praying God may grant your reverend son eternal rest, and with deep and heartfelt sympathy for you and yours, I remain . . ."

Thus ends the story of this valiant pioneer missionary narrated for the most part in his own words. He found his last resting place in the cemetery without the walls of Wuchang. Father Roediger mentions this fact in a letter to a confrère. He writes:

"The three cities, Wuchang, Hanyang and Hankow, lie together where the Hanyang River empties into the Yangtsekiang. Their combined population is said to be two millions. It was in Hankow where Father Engbring held the charge of apostolic procurator of the missions, and where he, exhausted with work, breathed forth his noble soul. His remains rest in the European cemetery near Wuchang."

A very honorable place in this cemetery was given to the first native American priest who labored and died in China. Father Francis Xavier Engbring, O. F. M., was buried beside the former sepulchre of Blessed Gabriel Perboyre, C. M., who was martyred in 1840, and on the very spot where Blessed Francis Clet, C. M., was martyred in 1819.

Father Engbring was only thirty-eight years old when he died. He was a priest but fifteen years, and a missionary in China for only seven. But during that short missionary career he held numerous important posts. He was rector of two different seminaries which prepared Chinese youths for the holy priesthood. He was active as a missionary and as dean in two large districts. He held the position of procurator apostolic for

twenty-one vicariates. The city of Wuchang he saved from bombardment and destruction, and the Christians of East Hupeh from a persecution. In northeastern and eastern Hupeh he suffered great hardships with admirable patience and endurance. When he felt his strength giving out, he nevertheless continued his laborious task, falling like a soldier in the midst of the fray. He was indeed a champion of Christ, a hero of the Cross, a worthy pioneer and exemplar of American missionaries in China.

With good reason do we honor the intrepid young man who, heeding his country's call to arms, unselfishly lays down his life for his native land. But have we not all the more reason to honor him who voluntarily exiles himself from home and country, goes to a strange and hostile land, and there spends his young life, not in killing his enemy, but in winning souls for Christ's Kingdom? And if that young missionary was a pioneer, leading the way and beckoning others to follow, our admiration and esteem must of necessity be so much greater. We owe a debt of gratitude to Father Engbring, and we have been slow in giving it to him. May his courage and disinterestedness, his wholehearted and

persevering service in the missions of China, hearten our representatives in the field and encourage us all to do what we can for that great and noble cause—to which he gave his talents and strength, his heart and his life.

EPILOGUE

In the course of our story of Father Engbring's life, we have learned of some confrères of his who labored as missionaries in China. Did American Franciscans continue to take an active interest in the missions of China? The question arises quite naturally; and it will be well to sketch briefly the missionary efforts of American Franciscans in China after Father Engbring's death.

From time to time American Franciscans did continue to go to China as missionaries. Thus, after Father Athanasius Goette was made vicar apostolic of northern Shensi, two Fathers of the Sacred Heart Province, departed for that mission field in 1907, and another of the same province in 1911. Father Sylvester Espelage, O. F. M., of the Cincinnati province, who was made prefect apostolic of Wuchang in 1925 and vicar apostolic of Wuchang in 1930, had been laboring in eastern

Hupeh since 1905.[1] Eastern Hupeh was the goal also of a number of other American Franciscans who left for the Chinese missions.[2]

Since 1922 American Franciscans have undertaken organized missionary work in China. In that year, Wuchangfu, the southeastern portion of the vicariate of eastern Hupeh, was ceded to the care of the four American Franciscan provinces of Cincinnati, Chicago (at that time, St. Louis), California and New York. In 1923 the Holy See separated the southern part from the

1. In *The Maryknoll Movement*, a dissertation submitted to the Catholic University of America, the Rev. George C. Powers erroneously refers, on p. 120, to Father Sylvester Espelage, O. F. M., as a Franciscan from St. Louis who went to China in 1907. On the same page he writes: "Two Jesuits, Fathers Hornsby and Arkwright, were the first American priests to go to China, of whom there is any known record." However, before his death, Father Hornsby himself informed the writer (cf. *Illinois Catholic Historical Review*, Vol. XI, p. 246), that he went to Macao, China, as a scholastic in 1892 (about four years after Father Engbring departed for China), was ordained a priest at Shanghai in 1897, and returned to the States in 1904. All the pioneer work, therefore, of which this book treats has entirely escaped the notice of Father Powers.

2. Latourette, *op. cit.*, p. 720, writes: "Between 1882 and 1921 ten American Franciscans joined the Shensi mission." Ten American Franciscans did indeed go to China between 1882 and 1921; but not all went to Shensi. As pointed out in these pages, some went to Hunan, some to Hupeh and some to Shensi. Cf. also the writer's article in *Franciscans in China* (Wuchang, Hupeh, China), January, 1929, p. 118-119.

territory that had been assigned to American Franciscans and erected it into the prefecture apostolic of Puchi, while the rest became the prefecture of Wuchang. The latter was raised to the rank of a vicariate apostolic on May 26, 1930.

In 1924 a second American Franciscan mission field was opened in China when the northernmost part of the Tsinanfu vicariate in Shantung province, northern China, was committed to the care of the province of the Sacred Heart (Chicago), the province to which the pioneer American Franciscan in China belonged. In a letter of the Franciscan minister general, the Wuchang prefecture was then (in 1925) assigned to the two provinces of Cincinnati and California, and in 1930 it became the sole charge of the Cincinnati province as a vicariate. After the district in the Tsinanfu vicariate, entrusted to the care of the Chicago province, had been somewhat reduced because of the erection of a new mission field for native priests in the same vicariate, it became the independent mission of Changtien in 1929.[3] It is a happy coincidence that the Tsinanfu vicariate is in the care of the Franciscans of the

3. *Acta Ordinis Fratrum Minorum*, XLVIII (1929), p. 125.

Holy Cross Province in Germany, the same which gave to the Chicago province Bishop Goette and the two fellow missionaries of Father Engbring, Fathers John Capistran Goette and Edmund Roediger.

In 1929 American Franciscans of the New York province took charge of the Paoking district, the northern section of the prefecture of Yungchow, southern Hunan; and thus a third American Franciscan mission in China was founded.

While these various missions were being established, bands of American friars journeyed year after year to China and swelled the ranks of their compatriot missionaries in that country. Looking back over the half century from 1882 to the beginning of 1930, we find that 44 American Franciscans, including 9 priests and 5 lay brothers, left our shores to labor as missionaries in China: four of these died in China, Father Engbring being the first of these; seven returned permanently to the States; and early in 1930, 33 were missionaries in three distinct American Franciscan missions in China.[4]

4. In the fall of 1930, five young American Franciscans joined their brethren in China.

Of the 39 American Franciscan priests who have labored in China during that half century, one has the distinction of being the first American bishop in China as a missionary, Father Francis Xavier and another enjoys the distinction of having been the first native American priest to labor and die in China as a missionary, Father Francis Xavier Engbring, O. F. M.

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CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF FATHER ENGBRING'S LIFE

	Date	Age	Event
1857	June 20	—	Born at Cincinnati, Ohio.
1874	Jan. 14	16+	Enters Franciscan novitiate at Teutopolis, Ill.
1875	Jan. 16	17+	Pronounce simple vows.
1878	Mar. 5	20+	Takes solemn vows.
1878	Sept. 19	21+	Receives tonsure, minor orders, subdiaconate.
1879	June 22	22	Promoted to the diaconate.
1880	May 16	22+	Ordained to the holy priesthood.
1880-1882		23-25	Professor of philosophy at Quincy, Ill.
1882-1888		25-31	Teacher of theology in St. Louis.
1888	Aug. 11	31+	Leaves San Francisco for China.
	Aug. 30		Lands at Yokohama, Japan.
	Sept. 7-18		Voyage to Shanghai, China.
	Sept.-Oct.		At Hankow, China.
	ca. Nov. 15		Arrives at Henchowfu, Hunan, China.
1889-1890		32-33	Rector of seminary at Tsaitung, Hunan, China.
1891-1892		34-35	Rector of seminary in Wuchang, Hupeh, China.
1893-1894		36-37	Dean in Northeastern Hupeh.
1895		38	Procurator apostolic in Hankow.
1895	July 31	38	Dies at Hankow, Hupeh.

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Pioneering in China.

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